Bygone Modernity: Re-imagining Italian opera in Milan, New York and Buenos Aires, 1887-1914

Ditlev Rindom

Clare College, University of Cambridge

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

This dissertation provides a detailed study of Italian operatic transfer between Milan, New York and Buenos Aires in the decades around 1900. It investigates how ideas and practices of Italian opera were defined in these two key American cities, offering an explicitly transnational perspective on Italian operatic culture. In so doing, it also considers the reciprocal impacts of transatlantic movement on operatic life in Milan during a period of burgeoning New World cultural and economic dominance.

This study comprises five broadly chronological case studies. Chapter One addresses the first transatlantic productions of Verdi's *Otello* (1887), in the context both of an emerging Italian culture industry and of rapid American urbanisation. Chapter Two considers the double-bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890) and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892), examining their pairing and performance history in Buenos Aires and New York in the light of mass Italian immigration as well as in terms of contemporary constructions of the "popular". Chapter Three turns to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904), examining the opera in relation to Puccini's 1907 New York tour and the American operatic gramophone industry. Chapter Four examines the 1906 Milan Exposition, investigating its musical activities – particularly a revival at La Scala of Verdi's *La traviata* (1853) – against contemporary fascination with Argentina. Chapter Five considers constructions of an Italian-American operatic canon in the early 1910s, focusing on the Argentine world premiere of Mascagni's *Isabeau* (1911) and the New York reception of Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re* (1913).

Overall, this dissertation seeks to demonstrate the complex position of Italian opera in these two American cities at a time of rapid demographic and urban change, while highlighting the importance of American perceptions in shaping Milanese (and more broadly Italian) operatic identities. If opera served as agent both of modernisation and of cultural continuity in the New World, commentators in New York and Buenos Aires frequently cast Italy itself as bygone: a conception that fuelled Milan's own drive towards modernity, while challenging familiar ideas of opera as a quintessentially Italian artform.

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Note on the text

This dissertation draws on many primary sources, many of which are in Italian and Spanish. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated; originals are given in the footnotes. Orthographical conventions of the time have been preserved in all quotations, including inconsistencies of spelling ("opera" or "ópera" in the Argentine press, for instance; or "Colon" and "Colón" in the Italian and Argentine press), unless irregularities or errors significantly impede comprehension.

Many of the primary sources are now in a fragmentary state, especially in Buenos Aires, with authors, titles, dates, page numbers and even publication names sometimes missing. Many nineteenth-century newspaper reviews in Italy and Argentina were also published anonymously. The most complete information available has been provided in all footnotes. A large number of primary sources from New York have been accessed at the New York Public Library via their press clippings files. This location has been referenced when the name of the newspaper or journal is missing. "NYPL" has been used as an abbreviation throughout for the New York Public Library.

Introduction: In Search of Italy

> Gentlemen, La Scala is a great theatre, but also a glorious temple of art: and I say glorious, because it is not true, it is not well-founded this accusation of decadence which is now thrown at it with such little consideration and, if I may say, with such levity.[1]

So declared Giulio Ricordi in 1885, in a speech given to Milan's municipal council. The context was a discussion over La Scala's future funding: whether the current level of municipal support was sustainable, or if the financial burden should fall further on box holders and members of the general public. Ricordi sought to justify current arrangements on a number of grounds. By 1885, accusations of decline were a familiar theme, and one that the publisher sought to refute. Audiences might long to enjoy a season filled with new masterpieces (as well as excellent performances), he accepted, but a historical view showed this was a delusion shaped by nostalgia: had the past few years alone not witnessed the premieres of *La forza del destino*, *Aida*, *La Gioconda*, *Ruy Blas* and the ballet *Excelsior*, with Luigi Manzotti's successor *Amor* soon to come?[2] And was not La Scala still the theatre where international works – such as Gounod's *Faust* – came to have their international reputation forged? The cost of such an undertaking could not be dismissed, but the investment was essential for any high-ranking European theatre. And where could be more fitting than in Italy, where "the Italian genius manifested itself most singularly and superlatively in the fine arts, as if the particular essence of our people is governed by a special characteristic of our sky and our climate"?[3]

These assertions of a unique bond between Italy and the arts – especially opera – were hardly new; indeed they could have been uttered on any musical-patriotic occasion since Italian unification (as well as throughout the previous century). But Ricordi here wielded them to justify the investment in La Scala in terms that were both explicitly local in tone, and remarkably far-flung in implication. The artistic and commercial activity of La Scala made it

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[1] "Signori, la Scala è un gran teatro, ma è anche un grande, un glorioso tempio dell'arte: e dico glorioso, perchè non è vera, non è fondata quell'accusa di decadenza che gli viene lanciata con tanto poco accorgimento e, permettemi il dirlo, con tanta leggerezza." "Discorso del comm. Giulio Ricordi pronunciato al Consiglio Communale di Milano il 31 dicembre 1885", in Pompeo Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889: Note storiche e statistiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1889), xiii-xviii; cited passage xiii.

[2] The revised version of Verdi's *La forza del destino* was premiered at La Scala in 1869, following the opera's world premiere in Saint Petersburg in 1862; *Aida* received its Italian premiere at La Scala in 1872, following its first performances in Cairo in 1871. Marchetti's *Ruy Blas* (1869), Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* (1876), and Manzotti's *Excelsior* (1881) all received their world premieres at La Scala; *Amor* debuted at the theatre in 1886.

[3] "il genio italiano si manifestò più singolarmente grande ed insuperato nelle belle arti, quasi che l'essenza peculiare del nostro popolo ristraesse una speciale caratteristica dal nostro cielo, dal nostra clima." Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, xiv.

a vibrant economic hub, he argued – an opinion inflected by the industrious values widely imputed to Milan, the so-called *capitale morale* of the new Italian nation.[4] "The Teatro alla Scala is therefore not just the centre of great artistic feats, but also the centre of great industry"; or, as he expressed it at the outset of the speech, a place "to do works of great public usefulness".[5] The vast web of businesses and opera professionals that had sprung up around the theatre – from music periodicals, costumiers, orchestral players, chorus members and piano manufacturers to ballet dancers and set designers – did not just benefit La Scala, however: they also spanned outwards to adjacent theatres in the city; "popular" theatres across Italy; and finally to the global network of opera houses who hired scores, costumes, sets and even singers and instrumentalists for their own productions. Milan's industriousness was inseparable from these business transactions, which transformed Italy's artistic sensibility into an object of exchange value: "for the Italian nation music is not just a source of glory, but it is also the cause of a truly great industry that has ramifications all over the world".[6]

This final summation came not from Ricordi himself, but from a foreigner – "the English minister Hudson", cited by the publisher after a meeting in Turin – and can serve to introduce one of this dissertation's key themes.[7] But equally significant is Ricordi's confidence that Milan's global connections were a source of unambiguous civic and economic strength. As he went on to demonstrate, the profits to be gained by such interactions were truly remarkable: the money spent on opera in Montevideo alone was 2,125,000 francs per season; in New York 4,500,000; Caracas 1,000,000; Santiago 2,400,000; Madrid 6,750,000; Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro together 5,000,000; and Lisbon 3,750,000. And this 25,500,000 was largely expended on Italian opera professionals

[4] On connections between La Scala's industrious image and that of Milan, see Laura Protano Biggs, "Musical Materialities in Milan and Liberal Italy at the fine secolo" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2014).

[5] "dunque il teatro alla Scala è centro di grandi esecuzioni artistiche non solo, ma è centro di grandi industrie"; "Quantunque questo capitulo del bilancio non possa formare oggetto di una vera e propria discussione, perchè è conseguenza di una convenzione tuttora vigente fra i Palchettisti del teatro alla Scala ed il Municipio, puro permettete ch'io svolga alcune considerazioni affinchè a questo voto sia tolto quel certo colore platonico, ch'io credo avessero i voti precedenti: preferirei si negasse voto faverevole alla sovvenzione, piutosto che accordarlo senza l'assoluto convincimento di fare opera di grande utilità pubblica. Questo dico perchè i voti accordati alla sovvenzione mi fecero l'effetto d'essere il frutto di un sentimento intimo che chiamerei ambrosiano: *"Peuh!...questa Scala c'è…dicono ch'è un gran teatro!...lasciamola stare in piedi fin che ci starà*." Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*; cited passages xv and xiii.

[6] "per la nazione italiana l'arte musicale non è solo una sorgente di gloria, ma è causa altresì di una vera e grande industria che ha ramificazioni in tutto il mondo." Ibid., xviii.

[7] Sir James Hudson was British ambassador to Turin from 1852-1863 and an enthusiastic supporter of Italian unification; he was widely associated with Camillo Cavour, Italy's first prime minister.

and their goods and services, professionals who would later return to Milan as their chief business centre: a circulation of people, money and objects that proved the city's role as nothing less than the operatic capital of the world.

A very different tone emerges from a report published barely twenty years later in *Corriere della sera*, Milan's most prominent newspaper, and a regular purveyor of operatic news. Entitled "The seasonal emigration of Italian artists to Latin America", the article reported on the imminent opening of the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and outlined the possible impact on Italy's own cultural life:

> Italian music is a commodity happily exported. If it weren't so, composers, editors and above all our artists would not be able to derive from their virtuosity such great earnings, which reach quite unbelievable heights. This constitutes, it's true, the most beautiful triumph of Italian lyric art, and national pride can feel itself justly satisfied. But every medal has a reverse, and in this case, it resides in the fact that the stages of the peninsula are being depopulated of the best artists, and worse still, real battles will have to be fought, because it's not certain that famous conductors won't also desert the directors' seats of the best theatres in Italy.[8]

As the article goes on to suggest, the threat of an operatic exodus did not come from Paris, Vienna or minister Hudson's London, but from cities across the Atlantic:

> North America, as we know, is our greatest enemy. The recent episode of the acquisition of Toscanini and Gatti Casazza, who for some ten years presided brilliantly over the destiny of La Scala, has served to reaffirm the inequality in…the arms of battle. But the danger doesn't just come from the North. If at this time in South America they weren't overwhelmed by heat, and people found that they have nothing better to do than lock themselves up in the boxes at their capacious theatres, then the catastrophe of Italian art in its homeland would be inevitable.[9]

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[8] "La musica italiana è merce di fortunata esportazione. Se così non fosse, i compositori, gli editori, e sopratutto gli artisti nostri, non trarrebbero dalla virtuosità loro quei lauti guadagni, che assai sovente raggiungono altezze inverosimili. Ciò costituisce, è vero, il più bel trionfo dell'arte lirica italiana, e l'orgoglio nazionale può sentirsene giustamente soddisfatto. Ma ogni medaglia ha il suo rovescio, e in questo caso il rovescio è constituito dal fatto che i palcoscenici della penisola si spopolano degli artisti migliori e, peggio ancora, vere battaglie si debbeno sostenere perchè i direttori d'orchestra di fama già sicura non disertino gli scanni direttoriali del maggiori teatri d'Italia." "Emigrazione temporanea nell'America Latina di artista italiani", *Corriere della sera*, 18 March 1908, 3.

[9] "L'America del Nord, lo si sa, è la nostra più grande nemica. L'episodio recentissimo dell'acquisto da essa fatto di Toscanini e Gatti Casazza, che per quasi dieci anni presiedettero brillantemente ai destini della Scala, ha servito a riaffermare l'ineguaglianza…delle armi di combattimento. Ma il pericolo non viene soltanto dal Nord. Se in questo periodo, nell'America del Sud non si sbuffasse dal caldo e la gente non avesse nulla di meglio da

Rather than offering a rich economic opportunity – one that would bolster Milan and Italy's self-image – operatic dissemination by this account instead threatened the foundations of the country's own cultural life. Arturo Toscanini and Giulio Gatti-Casazza, music director and general manager at La Scala from 1898 until 1908, had been lured away to run New York's Metropolitan Opera House the previous season; and the opening of the Colón risked a further, possibly fatal blow. As the article goes on to outline, Buenos Aires had already been hosting brilliant opera seasons for at least thirty years, with the new Colón joining the Teatro de la Ópera and the Politeama Argentina as a major venue for Italian repertory. Even from the outside the Colón offered an impression of "exceptional grandeur", while the interior was larger than either La Scala or Naples's San Carlo, and the entrance no less opulent than the Palais Garnier.[10] Not that the planned repertoire was exclusively Italian: in line with the offerings in New York, Wagner, Massenet, Gounod and Strauss were all on the programme for the Colón's opening season. But around half of the titles were by Italian composers; and unlike in New York all works (including German and French ones) were performed in Italian, by an Italian ensemble assembled especially for the season by Italian-born, Argentina-based impresario Cesare Ciacchi. The article's title adds a final note of anxiety. The "emigration" of Italian artists hints at the link between Italian operatic troupes and the seasonal migrant workers who would leave Italy for the summer before returning home for the winter. In so doing, the article evokes (without explicitly addressing) a broader nexus of concerns about the impact of Italian emigration on Italy's cultural and economic strength: not least around those same emigrants (operatic or otherwise) who might instead choose never to return home.

The distance between these two articles outlines the trajectory explored in this dissertation. In the broadest terms, I seek to demonstrate the extent to which ideas and practices of Italian opera were defined and reshaped outside Italy in the decades around 1900, in the two key American cities of New York and Buenos Aires; and to investigate the reciprocal impact of the westward transatlantic movement of operatic activity on Milan's operatic life, in light of a shift in the operatic balance of power. To be sure, continuities between these articles from 1885 and 1908 can also be found: from the patriotic, even hortatory associations between Italy and opera in both reports, to the preoccupation with

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fare che rinchiudersi nelle canicolari per quanto capaci sale dei teatri, la catastrophe dell'arte italiana negli stessi confine della patria sarebbe inevitabile." Ibid.

[10] "Il Colon, che anche all'esterno si presenterà con linee di eccezionale grandiosità, avrà una sala lunga 75 metri, cioè ancora più vasta di quella della nostra Scala e del San Carlo di Napoli. L'ingresso principale non sarà meno sontuoso di quello rinomatissimo dell'Opéra di Parigi. Tremila spettatori potranno assistere agli spettacoli." Ibid.

international operatic markets. Above all, there is the acknowledgement of a widespread perception of crisis: whether expressed by the author themselves or by other commentators. But the differences are equally significant, and as much at the centre of this dissertation's critical attention. Whereas Ricordi's anxieties centred around the claims of a stagnant repertory, by 1908 such preoccupations have expanded to Italy's own performance culture; and if in 1885 New York and Buenos Aires appeared highly lucrative markets for the Italian opera industry – albeit less so than Madrid, for example – twenty-three years later the relationship between Italy and the Americas is figuratively imagined as a pitched battle for pre-eminence. From the European side of the Atlantic, in other words, the quarter century between the two articles witnessed an extraordinary period of demographic and urban development, taking the Americas from an exciting new market for operatic consumption to a position as prospective world centre of Italian cultural activity. Italy's operatic medal had been reversed.

In this light, I aim to offer an explicitly transnational study of Italian operatic culture at the time, thereby contributing to an expanding musicological literature that has examined the impact of European music outside familiar geographical territories.[11] Opera's status as a quintessentially Italian artform has long been investigated by scholars, yet primarily from within the perspective of Italy's borders. Major studies by Birgit Pauls, Roger Parker, Laura Basini, Emanuele Senici, Alexandra Wilson, Francesca Vella, Mary Ann Smart and others have all examined Italian opera's role in nation-building before and after Italian unification, highlighting its crucial (if highly contested) part in shaping a national consciousness during the long nineteenth century.[12] Recent studies – notably Gundula Kreuzer's *Verdi and the Germans* – have also demonstrated Italian opera's complex position in nation-building outside Italy during the later decades of the period, urging a re-conceptualisation of Italian

[11] A prominent call for this scholarly turn was Gary Tomlinson, "Monumental Musicology", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132/2 (2007), 349-74. For a more recent discussion of the role of "borders" within musicology – one that highlights the persistence of boundaries within the growing scholarly canon – see Tamara Levitz, ed., "Musicology Beyond Borders?", colloquy, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65/3 (2012), 821-61.

[12] See Birgit Pauls, *Giuseppe Verdi und das Risorgimento: ein politischer Mythos im Prozess der Nationenbildung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996); Emanuele Senici, "Verdi's "Falstaff" at Italy's Fin de Siècle", *The Musical Quarterly* 85/2 (2001), 274-310; Laura Basini, "Reviving the Past: Italian Music History and Verdi" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2005); Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Mary Ann Smart, *Waiting for Verdi: Opera and Political Opinion in Nineteenth-Century Italy, 1815-1848* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); and, from a specifically Milanese perspective, Francesca Vella, "Verdi Reception in Milan: Memory, Progress and Italian Identity" (PhD dissertation, King's College London, 2014). A summary of debates about Verdi's earlier relationship to Italian identity can be found in Roger Parker, "Verdi politico: A Wounded Cliché Regroups", in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17/4 (2012), 427-36.

operatic history.[13] Yet the Americas have remained surprisingly peripheral to histories of Italian opera in this period, notwithstanding their prominence in biographies of Enrico Caruso and other celebrity singers and conductors.[14] New York and Buenos Aires have tended instead to be examined from largely local or national perspectives, and especially in relation to emerging "native" repertoire.[15] Several key questions therefore motivate this study. What role did these two American cities play in shaping ideas of Italian opera (and its relationship to Italian identity) at this time? How did Italian opera inform wider experiences of modernity in these burgeoning global capitals, particularly given widespread perceptions of an ongoing Italian operatic crisis, as well as in relation to new forms of operatic consumption? And how did transatlantic activity and interaction reciprocally help to shape Milanese (and more broadly Italian) operatic identities?

The following five chapters demonstrate the complex position of Italian opera within these two New World cities, outlining the ways in which Italian opera functioned both as an enduring tool of modernisation, and as a crucial agent of cultural continuity amid rapid urban change. Not only singers and conductors, but entire stage productions, composers, recordings and audiences travelled back and forth across the Atlantic, while new Italian operatic works were also premiered in the Americas, and an established repertory continued to flourish. As a

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[13] Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) offers a major study of Verdi's foreign reception in the context of German nation-building; Lorenzo Frassà and Michela Niccolai, eds., *Verdi Reception* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013) offers a more geographically wide-ranging overview, again focused on Verdi; Roberta Montemarra Marvin & Downing A. Thomas, eds., *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Borders* (London: Routledge, 2006) considers a number of European interactions. More recently, and beyond Italian opera, see also Sarah Hibberd and Laura Protano-Biggs, eds., "Nineteenth-Century Grand Opéra on the Move", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 29/1 (2017).

[14] In an earlier period, George W. Martin, *Verdi in America: "Oberto" Through "Rigoletto"* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011) offers a significant exception.

[15] On native operatic repertoire in New York in this period, see for example Carolyn Guzski, "American Opera at the Metropolitan, 1910-1935: A Contextual History and Critical Survey of Selected Works" (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2001); and Aaron Benjamin Ziegel, "Making America Operatic: Six composers' attempts at an American opera" (PhD dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, 2011). The search for a "great" Northern American composer in the USA in the nineteenth century is a key theme of Joseph Horowitz's *Classical Music in America: A History of it Rise and Fall* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), although Horowitz himself focuses strongly on performance as well as composition. More recently (and in relation to instrumental music) see also Douglas Shadle, *Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth-Century American Symphonic Enterprise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Major studies of the early twentieth-century compositional scene include Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). In Buenos Aires, see for instance Gesualdo, *Historia de la Musica en la Argentina, 1536-1900*; Kuss, Malena, "Nativistic Strains in Argentine Operas Premiered at the Teatro Colón (1908-1972)" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1976); Juan María Veniard, *Arturo Berutti: Un Argentino en el mundo de la Ópera* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Musicología "Carlos Vega", 1988); Enzo Valenti Ferro, *Historia de la ópera argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Artes Gaglianone, 1997). Buenos Aires's Carlos Vega institute has several long-running publication series focusing on Argentine composers, such as Melanie Plesch & Silvina Luz Mansilla, eds., *Nuevos estudios sobre música argentina* (Buenos Aires: EDUCA, 2005). Major exceptions examining the reception of non-native repertoire will be discussed later in this introduction.

result, La Scala's operatic pre-eminence was increasingly supplanted by a sense of Italy's symbolic capital; yet American conceptions of Italian decadence also fuelled Milan's own drive towards modernity.

In terms of focus, I do not aim to provide a chronicle of performances, despite their role in determining this study's geographical scope. This dissertation's aim instead is to re-orientate familiar ideas of the role of Italian opera in shaping (and challenging) conceptions of a broader exportable *italianità*: attending to the importance of the Americas in defining such ideas during a period in which the Italian future was increasingly identified with "New World" locations. Such ideas also interacted in crucial ways with broader perceptions within Italy of the Americas as an emblem of modernity itself. "In order to have news the American only has to tell what he sees around himself", writer and political exile Carlo Cattaneo had commented in 1855 in response to the acceleration of time he perceived in the USA.[16] If such sentiments were already in place by the mid nineteenth century, by 1900 they had expanded to include Argentina, and were sharply intensified by industrial developments: even if in both eras fascination was certainly not synonymous with approval. As I aim to show, New York and Buenos Aires were fundamental agents in the history of Italian opera around the turn of the twentieth century; yet rather than passively absorbing American perceptions, Milan's operatic culture also resisted and re-imagined them.

In its focus on Milan, New York and Buenos Aires, this is at one level a typically urban study: one that reaffirms the centrality of the city in shaping operatic activities and ideas.[17] Before introducing each of these locations in more detail, however, I want to stress that by concentrating on three cities I also seek to emphasise how cities could function as metonyms for both nation and continent, for the Old World and the New, in a period of shifting transatlantic relations. Interactions between Italy and the Americas were at one level negotiations between established political and economic entities: interactions in which human, material and capital flows were defined by government and legal structures and

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[16] Carlo Cattaneo, "Il poeta americano Longfellow" (1855), *Scritti leterari*, ed. Piero Treves (Florence: Le Monnier, 1981), cited in Axel Körner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763–1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1. As Körner goes on to argue, "what fascinated Italians about the early American republic was the idea of the country as a metaphor for the rapid transformation of the modern age […] Commenting on the perceived change in the semantic of historical time across the Atlantic helped Italians to negotiate their own experiences of change after the French revolution", 9.

[17] An early and highly influential example is Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); a more recent overview of approaches can be found in Suzanne Aspden's forthcoming edited collection, *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

physical pathways of transit.[18] But these material encounters co-existed (and interacted) with a repository of older ideas signifying "Italy" and "America", ideas that had enduring cultural force. Both real and imagined geographies, Italy and the Americas could therefore function as stand-ins for wider discussions about the relationship between a technologically-defined modernity and an imagined past, while retaining a sense of their geographical specificity. In that sense, opera was an ideal, indeed inevitable locus for transatlantic discussions. At once a venerable symbol of Italy's musical supremacy – a lyric artform poised between the aristocratic and the pastoral – yet deeply embedded in modern industrial developments, opera was continually re-fashioned and susceptible to multiple re-imaginings. Rather than standing still, in fact, opera, "Italy" and *italianità* were on the move.

Milan, Operatic Capital

The timeframe covered in this dissertation places it firmly within Italy's "Liberal Era" (1861-1914), the musical culture of which has become the subject of growing scholarly investigation in recent years.[19] In part this turn reflects a flourishing interest in relations between opera and urban culture: an area in which Italy – with its profusion of small cities and theatres, and its rich operatic culture – is exceptionally well-placed to attract attention.[20] But it also reflects more longstanding interests in music's relationship with nineteenth-century nationalism, a topic for which Italy again offers abundant material. These lines of enquiry have indeed been mutually illuminating: urban studies have demonstrated the

[18] See for example Drew Keeling, *The Business of Transatlantic Migration Between Europe and the United States, 1900-1914* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 2012). From a specifically Italian perspective, see Harold James & Kevin H. O'Rourke, "Italy and the First Age of Globalization, 1861-1940", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Economy Since Unification*, ed. Gianni Toniolo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37-68; Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); and Riccardo Liberatore, "Border Contagion: Mediterranean transit migration to the Atlantic and the spread of controls c.1860-1914" (DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 2019).

[19] For an overview of the Liberal Era, see for example Alberto Banti, *Storia della borghesia italiana: l'età liberale* (Rome: Donzelli, 1996); Denis Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 2009); and Alberto Banti, *Sublime madre nostra: la nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Rome: GLF editori Laterza, 2011).

[20] On relations between opera and Italy's urban culture beyond Milan, see for instance Cormac Newark, ""In Italy we don't have the means for illusion": Grand Opéra in Nineteenth-Century Bologna", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/3 (2007), 199-222; and Martin Deasy, "Local Color: Donizetti's *Il furioso* in Naples", *19th-Century Music* 32/1 (2008), 3-25. See also Carlotta Sorba, *Teatri: l'Italia del melodramma nell'età del Risorgimento* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2001) for a study of local theatrical cultures. In a French context during this period, see *Music, Theater and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. Annegret Fauser & Mark Everist (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009); Katharine Ellis, "Mireille's Homecoming? Gounod, Mistral and the Midi", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65/2 (2012), 463-509; Flora Willson, "Of Time and the City: *Don Carlos* and its Parisian Critics", *19th-Century Music* 37/3 (2014), 188-210.

importance of local identities within nation states, while highlighting the participation of cities in broader, trans-urban networks.[21] In the case of Italy, the period immediately following Italian unification emerges as one in which local and national self-representations co-existed in frequently awkward tension: regional identities (and divisions) competed with official government rhetoric as both Italy and its municipal councils sought to restructure the peninsula's economic and social model.

As numerous historians have noted, the unification of Italy (1815-1861) was far from being a coherent process.[22] In its wake, liberal economic policies were extended from the North to the South, in ways that ironically deepened pre-existing divisions.[23] These decisions reflected Italy's standing as a net agricultural exporter – wool, textiles, and wheat were its major industries, alongside iron and steel – and aimed to stimulate industrialisation in cities such as Milan; but the hit to the poorer South was harsh. Protectionist policies began to be introduced during the 1880s in response to cheaper goods arriving from frontier economies (such as the Americas), but economic liberalisation remained the dominant feature of the post-unification decades, in a country marked both by some of the highest rates of university attendance in Europe, and some of the lowest levels of literacy.[24] Italy's eventual entrance into the Triple Alliance in 1882 reflected broader efforts to play catch-up with Northern European countries (particularly in Northern Italian cities); the colonial wars that followed in Ethiopia, Libya and Eritrea were a bloody successor.

Against this background of regional division, efforts to generate a sense of national consciousness were unsurprisingly widespread, with monuments quickly erected to Garibaldi and Cavour, streets re-named, and expositions staged in Northern Italian cities by the 1880s

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[21] See Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Identity, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and William Whyte & Oliver Zimmer, eds., *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)

[22] For a recent history, see Lucy Riall, *Risorgimento: the History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Particularly influential in recent years has been Alberto Banti's work on the "Risorgimento canon", a collection of patriotic images and tropes that shaped national self-consciousness: see Alberto Mario Banti & Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Il Risorgimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2007). On the immediate aftermath of unification, see Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: The History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin, 2008), 198-241.

[23] On Italian trade policies in this period, see James & O'Rourke, "Italy and the First Age of Globalization, 1861-1940", 40. In the 1850s the Piedmontese government had liberalised its own trade policy, and these policies were immediately pushed on to the rest of the country following unification: by the mid-1870s Italy had the second lowest tariffs of any major continental economy. On North-South divisions, see Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[24] See Körner, *Politics of Culture.*

to celebrate Italy's industrial progress.[25] The cult of Queen Margherita sought to further perceptions of Italy as a family, with the nation itself imagined as a female entity; the funerals of Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi in 1878 and 1882 were major early focal points of an imagined national community.[26] Municipal governments were keen to assert civic identities within this shifting political environment, however; and cultural policy functioned as a crucial means. As Axel Körner has demonstrated (in relation to Bologna), aristocratic elites continued to exert power in local government, and discomfort was widespread about being subordinated to the nation state. Members of the educated middle classes also began to influence cultural institutions, encouraging a breakdown of class hierarchies, as well as the emergence of a self-consciously educated bourgeoisie.[27] Local museums and festivals emerged alongside national projects, and municipal efforts to promote patriotic figures and events could even precede official government policies.[28] If local urban identities remained the fundamental social unit within Italian society following unification, then, they could also function as a vantage point from which to orientate broader national and transnational relations.

Italian music was an integral part of these processes. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, Verdi was quickly incorporated into the pantheon of national and local heroes alongside Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini, and the newly-revived "ancient" music of Palestrina and Monteverdi.[29] Nowhere was this clearer than in Milan: the city in which many of Verdi's operas received their Italian premieres from the 1860s onwards, and which had strong reasons to identify itself as the country's musical *and* economic capital.[30] After 1861, responsibility

[25] As Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has argued (following Roberto Esposito) the project to "make Italians", in Massimo D'Azeglio's famous words, was one that extended beyond patriotic occasions to education, medical science and the military. Stewart-Steinberg's study proceeds particularly from Francesco de Sanctis's (Giolitti's Minister of Education) reading of Giacomo Leopardi, and his perception that Italians lacked proper interiority and needed to be educated into modern subjectivity. See Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians (1860-1920)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[26] In this sense, Italy's journey in the late nineteenth century was entirely unexceptional, as it participated in wider European (and American) projects of nation-building. On "imagined communities", see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); on nationalism, classic texts remain Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programmes, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998). A stimulating recent overview is offered by Richard J. Evans in *The Pursuit of Power: Europe, 1815-1914* (London: Penguin, 2016).

[27] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 1-79.

[28] Ibid., 163-96.

[29] See Pauls, *Giuseppe Verdi und das Risorgimento*; Basini, "Reviving the Past"; and Vella, "Verdi Reception in Milan".

[30] *Don Carlo* (1862) received its Italian premiere in Bologna in 1867 in Italian translation, but the revised four-act version premiered in Milan in 1884, as did the revised version of *Simon Boccanegra* (1857) in 1881; *Aida*

for financing opera houses had been handed over to local governments, and La Scala – like other Italian theatres – had to restructure its finances to avoid financial disaster.[31] As Ricordi's 1885 speech made clear, accusations of decline beset the theatre, as new works failed to win public and critical favour, and balancing the books encouraged moves to offer symphonic concerts and events appealing to the general public.[32] Yet La Scala remained central to the city's self-image, as the most internationally renowned theatre in Italy, in a city that was the nation's publishing centre and home to a major conservatory (as well as several smaller theatres). Founded in 1778 alongside the Teatro alla Cannobbiana, La Scala had hosted the premieres of works such as Bellini's *Norma* (1831), Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833) and Verdi's *Nabucco* (1842) and in recent years (as Laura Protano-Biggs has shown) also positioned itself as the epicentre of new operatic technologies such as electric lighting. No wonder, then, that Ricordi's speech was reprinted in Pompeo Cambiasi's history of the theatre published in 1889. Arguing for La Scala's continued artistic and financial productivity, Ricordi aimed to assert an operatic future for Milan as glorious as its imagined past.

Milan would never be the Italian capital; yet by the 1880s its reputation as the nation's economic and moral centre was one that local elites carefully sought to fashion. Liberal economic policies were identified with the spiritual character of the city, characterised above all by hard work, industrialisation and concepts of progress: an explicitly modern, secular counterpart and rival to the official capital of Rome.[33] As the centre of several major industries – notably metal and chemicals – and home to an especially developed transport network, these claims had some basis; and its historic links to the Hapsburg empire positioned it as an obvious brokerage point for Italy's Northern European relations. The 1860s and 1870s witnessed major urban redevelopment, as (under the influence of Haussmann in Paris) old buildings were knocked down and streets widened to create space

(1871) had arrived at La Scala in 1872, while *Otello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893) both received their world premieres at the theatre.

[31] Sorba, *Teatri;* and regarding Milan in particular, Jutta Toelle, *Bühne der Stadt: Mailand und das Teatro alla Scala zwischen Risorgimento und Fin de Siècle* (Vienna; Böhlau, 2009).

[32] On the immediate post-unification era at La Scala, see Carlos del Cueto, "Opera in 1860s Milan and the End of the Rossinian Tradition" (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2011).

[33] On the myth of Milan as Italy's *capitale morale*, see Giovanna Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale: letteratura e pubblicistica a Milano fra otto e novecento* (Milan: Edizioni di comunità, 1982); on inter-urban rivalry with Rome, see especially 145-66. On the *capitale morale* in a later era, see also John Foot, *Milan since the Miracle: City, Culture, and Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2001). As Foot notes, these ideas endure in Milan's present-day position as the centre of Italy's design, fashion and banking industries.

for new institutions, and the city's population boomed.[34] The 1881 National Exposition in Milan was a major vehicle for demonstrating progress; by 1884 architect Cesare Beruto had been commissioned to devise a master plan for the city.[35]

Musical activity was also informed by such industrious claims. As Protano-Biggs and Gavin Williams have shown, these were evident both in La Scala's technological advances and rhetoric of productivity, and in the broader legacy of urbanisation in the city's musical practice; it is no accident that Futurism should have emerged in Milan.[36] Tropes of progress and urban modernity likewise coloured the Milanese reception of Verdi and his contemporaries. As Francesca Vella has demonstrated, Verdi and his works functioned throughout the 1860s-1880s in contemporary discourse both as a symbol of Italy's musical past, and as a possible indicator of future paths.[37] Recent studies by Alexandra Wilson, Arman Schwartz, Emanuele Senici and Alessandra Campana have all outlined the extent to which Italian operatic works during the 1880s and 1890s – in Milan and elsewhere – were saddled with the pressure to be "modern": to participate in a broader discourse of cultural progress and urbanisation, defined musically by an awareness of German and French trends, while retaining an identifiable sense of *italianità*.[38] Efforts to move on from Italy's musical past also played out in more obvious ways. Following the introduction of Meyerbeer and Wagner's works in Bologna in the late 1860 and 1870s, operatic repertoire at La Scala also became more international in focus, as part of an effort to adapt La Scala's profile to shifting public demand and economic circumstances.[39]

If Milan's urban and musical culture was preoccupied with progress, however, these local and national self-representations existed in complex dialogue with equally powerful

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[34] On Milan's urban development during the late nineteenth century, see Elisabetta Colombo; a useful overview is also provided by Lucy M. Maulsby, *Fascism, Architecture and the Claiming of Modern Milan, 1922-194* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014) 12-37.

[35] Milan's population increased significantly between 1861 and 1916: the 1861 census recorded it as around 240,000 (half that of Naples); by 1881 it was around 320,000 and nearly 500,000 by the beginning of the new century, as people moved there from across Lombardy and Italy. See Maulsby, *Fascism, Architecture and the Claiming of Modern Milan, 1922-1943.*

[36] See again Protano-Biggs, "Musical Materialities"; and Gavin Williams, "Arts of Noise: Sound and Media in Milan, c1900" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2013).

[37] Vella, "Verdi Reception in Milan"; and in particular Vella, "Verdi's *Don Carlo* as Monument", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 25/1 (2013), 75-103.

[38] Senici, "Verdi's "Falstaff""; Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Alessandra Campana, *Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Arman Schwartz, *Puccini's Soundscapes: Realism and Modernity in Italian Opera* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016).

[39] See Toelle, *Bühne der Stadt*; and for more general overviews, Giuseppe Barigazzi, *La Scala Racconta* (Milan: RCS Rizzoli libri, 1984; fifth edition 2001), 245-355; and Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera: from Verismo to Modernism, 1890-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), 14-20.

(and more longstanding) perceptions of Italy's identity and national character.[40] Ricordi's speech is again revealing. References to the influence of sky and climate associate the "Italian genius" with geography and climate, framing Italy as an inherently artistic and musical place. Ricordi's argument thereby participates in a much longer Enlightenment tradition (extending back to Montesquieu, Rousseau and De Stäel), in which Italy is imagined as a uniquely musical site: a culturally rich region responsible for the origins of European culture, but now economically and politically diminished; a pastoral and innately musical landscape persisting within a nascent modernity.[41] These perceptions were firmly in place by the early nineteenth century, in Italy and abroad, and continued to be voiced throughout the post-unification period by a variety of commentators.[42] At one level, they offered an obvious basis for constructing a national imaginary. Opera had long been considered one of Italy's most prized cultural achievements, with associations between Italy and vocality a hallmark of foreign travel writings. Claims of Verdi's operas' intimate involvement with the Risorgimento movement – an idea well established by the 1870s and 1880s – rested precisely on this notion: a belief that operatic singing was an innately Italian activity, one that could shape national consciousness.[43]

Yet such a romantic image was precisely one that the *capitale morale* myth sought to move away from, by asserting Milan's parity with other modern cities.[44] Turning opera into "operasità" – a form of productive labour to match industrial activity – was one rhetorical

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[40] Distinctions between national identity and national character are slippery yet rely to a large extent on differentiating between cultural practices and a more enduring set of behaviours and mentalities. On this in an Italian context, see Silvana Patriarca. 'National Identity or National Character? New Vocabularies and Old Paradigms', in *Making and Remaking Italy. The Cultivation of National Identity Around the Risorgimento*, ed. Albert R. Ascoli & Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 299-319.

[41] On De Staël, see Robert Casillo, *The Empire of Stereotypes: Germaine de Staël and the Idea of Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); for an overview see Roberto Dainotto, *Europe in Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

[42] For a recent discussion within an early nineteenth-century Italian context, see Ellen Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy, 1770–1830* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 85-111.

[43] The origins of Verdi's association with the Risorgimento have been the source of much scholarly debate; for a summary, see Parker, "Verdi politico". A more recent investigation of Italian opera's relationship with the Risorgimento movement is offered by Mary Ann Smart, *Waiting for Verdi.* Historically, such debates have circled around the precise degree of political agency Italian opera exerted within the unification movement, in particular its role in shaping public consciousness of a united Italy; the Verdian patriotic chorus and the use of the acrostic Viva VERDI have been major points of contention. More recent scholarship has moved away from explicit metaphors to consider the opera house's importance as a centre of social and political networks.

[44] As Giovanna Rosa argues, ideas of the *capitale morale* and of Milan's metropolitan status were in continued tension with a sense of its inadequacy to bigger urban centres: see *Il mito della capitale morale*, 267-90 (a chapter titled "Il paradosso culturale della Milano Borghese"). The sordid realities of urban life – poverty, slums, suicide and workers' riots – were a further source of anxiety, recorded in the contemporary study *Il ventre di Milano*, which aimed to give an unvarnished account of the city's daily life following the 1881 Exposition: ibid. 239-66. See *Il ventre di Milano: fisiologia della capitale morale* (Milan: Aliprandi, 1888).

(and material) solution to the problem.[45] But other views continued to be voiced inside and outside Italy, that both reinforced older perceptions of Italian culture, and re-positioned them in relation to other political geographies. And as *Corriere della sera*'s 1908 article makes clear, by the early twentieth century the key centres for Italian operatic and cultural activity were increasingly felt to have moved across the Atlantic. "I wondered, for my own part, where I had seen it all before--the pink-walled villas gleaming through their shrubberies of orange and oleander, the mountains shimmering in the hazy light like so many breasts of doves, the constant presence of the melodious Italian voice" remarked one celebrated writer in 1909, after a visit to Lombardy's Lake Como. "Where indeed but at the Opera when the manager has been more than usually regardless of expense?"[46] The author was not German, French or British, but instead the American Henry James; a figure who (despite a self-consciously cosmopolitan profile) still registered Italy through an explicitly foreign and exoticising gaze.

The tendency of musical studies of Italy's Liberal Era to look inward is in many respects entirely understandable. This period has long been overlooked in favour of the romance of the Risorgimento, and figures such as Puccini and Mascagni have been slow to enter the musicological canon – dismissed by an earlier generation of scholars as insufficiently modernist.[47] In the wake of a broader move towards reception and performance studies, the period has begun to receive far more sustained attention, with Milan providing the focus for a number of significant projects. Yet as musicologists have investigated the Liberal Era further, the need for a more transnational perspective on the intersections between Italian opera, Italy and *italianità* has become more obvious.[48] The economic importance of the Americas for Italian opera troupes in the post-unification era was outlined decades ago, as well as the allure of huge American fees for celebrity performers.[49] Scholars inside and

[45] "Operasità" (industriousness) was one of the goals explicitly sought for La Scala's public image when it set up its commissione artistica in 1872, as recorded in the board minutes. See again Protano-Biggs, "Musical Materialities", 4-5.
[46] Henry James, *Italian Hours* (Boston: Houghton, 1909), 132.
[47] For a useful recent overview of Puccini's reception history, see Emanuele Senici, "Introduction: Puccini, His World and Ours", in *Giacomo Puccini and his World*, ed. Emanuele Senici & Arman Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-25.
[48] See Axel Körner "Opera and Nation in Nineteenth-Century Italy: Conceptual and Methodological Approaches" in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 14/4 (2012), 393-9; and Vella, "Verdi Reception in Milan", 166-75. The Leverhulme-funded research group "Re-imagining italianità" – launched while this dissertation was in its early stages – has provided a vehicle for exploring these issues; a version of chapter four was presented at the first meeting in Cambridge, September 2016.
[49] On the economic allure of the Americas, see, for example, Fiamma Nicolodi, "Opera Production from Italian Unification to the Present", in *Opera Production and its Resources*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi & Giorgio Pestelli,

outside the Anglo-American academy have made significant contributions to mapping Italian opera's global history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, highlighting this repertory's wide dissemination and cultural prestige during an age of colonial and post-colonial expansion.[50] Yet a broader movement in the humanities towards global history and cultural mobility has undoubtedly made this development seem more urgent, and invited fresh approaches.[51] If New York and Buenos Aires are hardly peripheral in most global economic histories, this scholarly turn has encouraged previously disparate operatic events and materials to be connected into narratives of cross-cultural contact, and given renewed attention to overlooked operatic locations.[52] At the same time, this disciplinary move has highlighted the extent to which Italy's political and economic developments throughout the nineteenth century were shaped by transnational encounters and exchanges that were

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trans. Lydia D. Cochrane (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998; Italian edition, 1987), 165-228; especially 170-82.

[50] On Italian operatic dissemination beyond Europe during the long nineteenth century (in addition to scholarship related to Buenos Aires and New York) see for example Lauro Ayestarán, *La música en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: Servicio Oficial de Difusión Radio Eléctrica, 1953); Mario Cánepa Guzmán, *La ópera en Chile, 1839-1930* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, 1976); José Octavio & Mónica Escobedo, *Dos siglos de ópera en México* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1988); Juan Carlos Estenssoro, *Musica y sociedad coloniales: Lima 1680-1830* (Lima: Colmillo Blanco, 1989); Susana Salgado, *The Teatro Solís: 150 years of Opera, Concert and Ballet in Montevideo* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003); Cristina Magaldi, *Music in Imperial Rio de Janeiro: European Culture in a Tropical Milieu* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004); David R.M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Adam Mestyan, *Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); and Benjamin Walton, "*L'italiana* in Calcutta", in *Operatic Geographies*, ed. Aspden, 119-32. A useful recent reflection on global music histories is offered by Martin Stokes, "Notes and Queries on 'Global Music History'", in *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project*, ed., Reinhard Strohm (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017).

[51] Particularly influential texts addressing the nineteenth century include Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); and Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, trans. Sorcha O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On cultural mobility, see for example Stephen Greenblatt , ed., *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); for overviews of global history more generally, see Jürgen Osterhammel & Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local*, ed. A.G. Hopkins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). The "global turn" has also directed further attention to cities as nodes within transnational networks, particularly during the late nineteenth century. See for example Andreas Huyssen, ed., *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); and Pierre-Yves Saunier & Shane Ewen, eds., *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). A recent overview of transnational urban histories is offered by Claus Møller Jørgensen, "Nineteenth-century transnational urban history", *Urban History*, 44/3 (2017), 544-63. Studies that have explored these themes up to the twenty-first century include Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization (*Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2000); for a historical long view, see also Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[52] On Caruso, see Pietro Gargano and Gianni Cesarini, *Caruso, Vita e arte di un grande cantante* (Milan: Longanesi, 1990); and Pedro Rivera, *Caruso en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Estudios Avanzados, 1994).

mutually informative.[53] In the decades immediately following unification, Italy's GDP per capita may have been one of the lowest in Western Europe – less than half that of Great Britain, for example, and influenced by the major wealth gap between North and South; but perceptions of Italy as inward-looking and anomalous within nineteenth-century Europe are clearly in need of further revision.[54]

The Liberal Era invites a revised account for several specific reasons. If the Risorgimento was shaped by foreign encounters, comparisons with other nations were no less potent in the years after 1861.[55] Worries about Italy's international standing shaped domestic and foreign policy in myriad ways, from colonial interventions to educational policies, while defining liberal economic policies. At the same time, the decades around 1900 have been identified as crucial ones in the history of globalisation, as well as constituting Eric Hobsbawm's well-known "age of Empire".[56] As one recent overview describes it, the decades around 1900 were ones in which globalisation "first became clearly manifest", with previously disparate communities connected by the flow of people and commodities as part of the so-called Second Industrial Revolution.[57] Different chronologies have been proposed for such a process; yet this period undoubtedly witnessed profound developments in the history of globalisation. High-speed steamships had reduced transatlantic travel to two weeks by the 1880s, while the transatlantic telegram enabled messages to be delivered with unprecedented rapidity.[58] The spread of worlds' fairs and department stores also gave

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[53] On Italy's global connections during the nineteenth century, see for example Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Maurizio Isabella & Konstantina Zanou, eds., *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). It is nonetheless significant that recent overviews have tended to remain focused on domestic issues, to some degree reinforcing perceptions of nineteenth-century Italy as an inward-looking and backward country: see for example John A. Davis, ed., *Italy in the Nineteenth Century. 1796-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[54] On economic comparisons, see Gianni Toniolo, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Economy Since Unification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[55] On émigré experiences during the Risorgimento in Latin America, Spain and France, see again Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*.

[56] See in particular Kevin H. O'Rourke & Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); and Emily S. Rosenberg, ed., *A World Connecting: 1870-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). See also Eric Hobsbawm's seminal *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987).

[57] Steven C. Topik & Allen Wells, "Commodity Chains in a Global Economy", in *A World Connecting: 1870-1945*, 593-812; cited passage on 593.

[58] Douglas Burgess, *Engines of Empire: Steamships and the Victorian Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), especially 7-91; Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), particularly 30-58; and Topik & Wells, "Commodity Chains in a Global Economy". As Topik and Wells argue, coal, iron and steam continued to be important industries, but by the late nineteenth century electricity, oil and steel had all overtaken them, and gave rise to new "economies of scale". See 612-14.

populations easy access to a newly global range of commodities and cultures. Above all, massive global migrations fundamentally changed the demographics of countries such as the USA and Argentina: 55 million people left Europe for the Americas and Australia between 1850 and 1914, in response to improved transport links, labour shortages, booming New World economies, colonial expansion, and domestic famines and over population.[59] Economic connections were well-established between Europe and its American former colonies before the 1870s, but technological advances brought these to a new pitch: export shares for major, present-day OECD countries rose from 1870-1913 to a height not be matched again until the 1950s.[60]

These developments unmistakably shaped economic and cultural activity in Liberal Italy, and particularly in Milan. Given its geographical location, Milan was already well-connected to other Western-European capitals by 1861, with British and French culture strongly present throughout the Liberal Era; and as a maritime nation Italy had long enjoyed international trade connections. In 1894 the Touring Club Italiano was set up, with the Automobile Club following a decade later; the Simplon Tunnel (connecting Milan directly with Paris) finally opened in 1906, celebrated by Italy's first international exposition. The gradual industrialisation of Northern Italy (and pockets of the South) also encouraged international trade, and foreign goods – especially luxury items – began entering the Italian marketplace in greater numbers. Italian products were also sent across the Atlantic and even as far as Australia – particularly in Italian émigré heartlands.[61] As the nation's publishing heartland, Milan also set the standard for foreign reporting within Italy. Alongside *Corriere della sera* (founded in 1876), a wide range of newspapers and specialist periodicals were produced, exposing readers to foreign news and cultural activities. Foreign newspapers were available in public libraries and private clubs, and a wide range of new cultural institutions and museums gave access to international culture.

More than any other development, however, it was Italy's part in the mass European emigration of the period that most radically reshaped Italy's relationship with the rest of the

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[59] For a recent urban study of expositions, see Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities. Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). On migration, see Timothy J. Hatton & Jeffrey G. Williamson, *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially 32-58. In an anglophone context, see also James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[60] O'Rourke & Williamson, *Globalization and History*, 29-55.
[61] Emanuela Scarpellini, *Material Nation: A Consumer's History of Modern Italy*, trans. Daphne Hughes & Andrew Newton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

world – and with itself. Between 1870 and 1914, around 13 million Italians left the country, in one of the greatest migrations in human history; indeed, until the present-day Syrian refugee crisis it was generally considered the largest.[62] Nearly half of these emigrants would travel to the Americas, with migration rates radically increasing from 1880 onwards.[63] Emigration to the Americas was predominantly from the South, but Genoa – Milan's nearest port – was one of two major departure points, and emigration was endlessly discussed in the Milanese press. Many emigrants would eventually return home or pursue careers as seasonal workers, contributing further to a transatlantic human flow. But many also remained and established families and businesses, giving rise to explicitly Italian-American identities and enduring cultural links. As with other contemporary mass migrations, the Italian diaspora was driven by a complex mix of reduced travel time, economic opportunity abroad, and unique domestic difficulties. But the scale of the Italian departure was extraordinary, and it was perceived by many on both sides of the Atlantic to reflect intractable problems with Italy's own economy – even if, in reality, the situation was more complex.[64] While immigration had a major impact on the Americas, emigration also shaped Italy's own economy and society in significant ways, as transatlantic exodus gave rise to a range of cultural institutions to sustain links between émigrés and their homeland: a move that projected domestic nation-building efforts outwards.[65] The net effect was twofold: not only was a sense of Italian national belonging at times more clearly defined outside of Italy; but efforts to maintain cultural (and commercial) ties with émigrés could sharpen a national imaginary within Italy. Declarations of innate links between Italy and *italianità* nevertheless had to contend with competing

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[62] See Emilio Franzina, *L'immaginario degli emigrant: Mitti e raffigurazioni dell'esperienza italiana all'estero fra due secoli* (Paese: PAGUS, 1992); and Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

[63] Samuel Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). On Italian emigration in this period, see also Fernando Devoto & Gianfausto Rosoli, eds., *La Inmigración Italiana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1985); John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Donna Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988). More recently, see also Marco Soresina, "Italian migration policy during the Great Migration Age, 1888-1919: the interaction of emigration and foreign policy", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 21/5 (2016), 723-46.

[64] As Axel Körner has recently shown, emigration to the USA also reflected a longstanding in the American republic during the Risorgimento: see his *America in Italy.* In an operatic context, Pierpaolo Polzonetti has explored depictions of the USA in eighteenth-century Italian opera: *Italian Opera in the Age of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). The most well-known depiction of South America in Italian opera before Antônio Carlo Gomes's *Il guarany* (1870) is probably Verdi's *Alzira* (1845), set in colonial Peru.

[65] Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

constructions of Italian culture by English and Spanish-language communities across the Atlantic – a shifting configuration of images against which Italy's future was defined.

In all these transatlantic connections, opera played a significant role. Italian opera may have "globalised early", in Jürgen Osterhammel's words – travelling across the Atlantic and to the Far East already by the 1830s; but the decades around 1900 witnessed an explosion of operatic activity.[66] Italian mass emigration generated substantial new audiences for opera, and encouraged visiting Italian troupes to cross the Atlantic (as well as fuelling the emergence of home-grown operatic performers and administrators). Celebrity singers, conductors and composers were lured on tour in ways unimaginable a generation earlier: Puccini, Mascagni and Leoncavallo all visited the Americas, whereas Verdi, Boito and Ponchielli never did.[67] Entire operatic productions – such as Verdi's *Otello* (1887) and Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re* (1913) – also began to be transported from La Scala and elsewhere to New York and Buenos Aires, building upon an emerging trend for touring productions within Italy. And developments in communication technologies enabled operatic news to travel swiftly in both directions. Operatic reports from New York and Buenos Aires were regularly printed in Italian musical periodicals and newspapers, alongside a stream of travel accounts, news summaries and personal communications.[68] If these decades witnessed new levels of transatlantic integration, they are also ones in which industrialisation shaped new transatlantic power relations. Distinctions between operatic centre and periphery were radically in flux: the "New World" also represented a possible Italian operatic future.

Transatlantic Operatic Beginnings

Such a claim would surely have come as a surprise to the first Italian operatic troupes that crossed the Atlantic in the early nineteenth century. Italian opera had first arrived in New York in November 1825, with a performance of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Park Theatre, led by tenor-turned-impresario Manuel García; his daughter Maria García (later Malibran) sang Rosina, with a chorus and 24-piece orchestra made up of local musicians.[69]

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[66] Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 28.
[67] On the lure of the Americas for singers, see John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[68] On travel writings, see for example Andrew J. Torrielli, *Italian opinion on America as revealed by Italian travellers, 1850-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).
[69] Karen Ahlquist, *Democracy at the Opera: Music, Theater and Culture in New York City, 1815-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 41-82; Francis Rogers, "America's First Grand Opera Season", *The Musical*

The company had already performed in London, and with García then in his fifties and in vocal decline, the tour to New York – at the encouragement of local businessman Dominick Lynch – was an adventurous money-making exercise; the troupe eventually stayed for 10 months and gave nearly 80 performances, mainly of Rossini, before moving south to Mexico.[70] The arrival of Italian opera in Buenos Aires was nearly exactly contemporaneous. The first staged performances occurred in 1825 under the guidance of Spanish violinist-impresario Mariano Pablo Rosquellas, then resident in the city, who put together a company in Rio de Janeiro; extracts from *Il barbiere* and other Rossini operas had been performed earlier in the decade, alongside orchestral works by Mozart, Dussek and others.[71]

Various other forms of music theatre had been performed in both cities in earlier decades, and staged opera was not in itself a complete novelty. Audiences in New York (and in the then US capital, Philadelphia) had enjoyed local English-language opera for many years, and from the mid-1820s would enjoy French opera troupes travelling north from New Orleans as well. In Buenos Aires, Spanish *tonadillas* had flourished before the Rio de la Plata's independence from Spain in 1816, and were frequently performed as excerpts during spoken theatre as well as in freestanding performances.[72] In a post-Napoleonic context, however, Italian opera quickly started to make its presence felt in South America: the relocation of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 brought Italian opera to the continent, and the wars of independence throughout South America made non-Spanish cultural models increasingly attractive.[73] Along the North American east coast, British models of cultural consumption had by contrast remained more appealing, as the García troupe's visit outlines; and in line with the quick resumption of trading relations after 1776, Italian opera functioned early on as an indicator of the USA's participation in a European idea of civilisation (notwithstanding rhetoric of cultural rupture and the relatively modest size

Quarterly 1/1 (1915), 93-101; and John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 71-98.

[70] The presence of Lorenzo da Ponte in New York – then a professor at Columbia University – was surely a further incentive.

[71] Mariano G. Bosch, *Historia de la Ópera en Buenos Aires: origiden del canto y la musica: Las primeras compañias y los primeros cantantes* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta el comercio,1905), 23-67. See also Benjamin Walton, "Rossini in Sudamerica", *Bollettino del Centro Rossiniano di Studi* 51 (2011), 111-36.

[72] Ibid., 1-23. For a recent study of the tonadilla, see Elisabeth LeGuin, *The Tonadilla in Performance: Lyric Comedy in Enlightenment Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

[73] On the allure of Italian opera as a specifically non-Spanish (as opposed to specifically *Italian*) cultural symbol in post-colonial Rio de la Plata, see Benjamin Walton, "Italian Operatic Fantasies in Latin America", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17/4 (2012), 460–71.

of New York).[74] In both cases, however, the first arrival of Italian opera in the Americas was probably a mixed affair in terms of quality: high levels of publicity and a fashionable audience – James Fenimore Cooper and Joseph Bonaparte both attended the first New York *Barbiere* – did not guarantee performances worthy of La Scala or the Théâtre Italien, and expectations on the part of the performers were probably often low.[75]

In broad terms, the operatic history of both Buenos Aires and New York developed in tandem in the following decades, as a period of itinerant performances was followed by the construction of permanent major opera houses in both cities during the 1850s. The 1830s and early 1840s had witnessed an operatic dearth in Buenos Aires, as war raged with Uruguay and Paraguay (under dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas), and there were virtually no staged operatic performances at all again until the later 1840s.[76] With the return of visiting Italian troupes, the Teatro Colón was commissioned by the local government and opened in 1857 with a performance of Verdi's *La traviata* (1853), starring tenor Enrico Tamberlick as Alfredo. The theatre quickly established itself as one of the major venues for operatic performance in South America: at over 2500 seats, it was also the largest, easily eclipsing in stature the older Teatro Victoria and Teatro Coliseo in the city. In New York a series of small theatres hosted Italian opera alongside other entertainments following the García troupe's departure, but the financial panic of 1837 hit theatrical life hard, and most performances remained in English.[77] By mid century, things were shifting: the Havana company introduced many of Verdi's operas to East Coast audiences, and offered a musical standard previously unencountered by New York audiences; in John Dizikes's words, it was "America's introduction to star singers on a large scale."[78] Jenny Lind's legendary tour of the USA in

[74] On continuities before and after the Declaration of Independence, see A. G. Hopkins *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 142-90. New York's population in the 1810s was less than 100,000 according to most estimates, compared to London's 1,000,000 by 1800. New York's population would nonetheless boom throughout the first half of the nineteenth century in response to domestic migration, before the immigration era of the late nineteenth century.

[75] As Benjamin Walton has shown, early encounters with Italian opera outside of a European context were often shaped by a mixture of pride, curiosity and uncertainty, as live performances were measured up against an imagined original; performance levels could also vary wildly, from the soon to be legendary Maria García (if not then famous) to worn-out singers whose European careers were effectively over. See "Italian Operatic Fantasies in Latin America"; and "*L'italiana* in Calcutta", in Aspden, *Operatic Geographies*, 119-32.

[76] See again Bosch, *Historia de la Ópera en Buenos Aires*, 80-130; on Montevideo, Susana Salgado, *The Teatro Solís*, 8-22; on operatic life in both cities during and after the war, see also Benjamin Walton, "Feast and Famine in the Operatic Historiography of the Río de la Plata", conference paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, San Antonio, 2018.

[77] This is not a judgement on quality. Local English-language troupes may well have been as good as – or better than – visiting Italian companies, but they operated as a separate production system. On English-language performances during this period, see Katherine K. Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[78] Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 124. On the Havana company, see Martin, *Verdi in America.*

1850 highlighted the money to be made in post-Gold Rush America, and New York's Academy of Music eventually opened four years later (1854).[79] The inaugural performance of *Norma* starring soprano Giulia Grisi – the Adalgisa in the La Scala world premiere – and tenor Giovanni Mario would place New York firmly on the global operatic map; by the late 1850s it is clear that both it and Buenos Aires were emerging as significant operatic hubs – if still significantly behind major European capitals in terms of the prestige (and extent) of their musical life.

The mid century more broadly marked a major turning point in the history of Buenos Aires and Argentina. Under Spanish colonial rule (1516-1816), Buenos Aires had been a relatively unimportant provincial city, first as part of the Viceroyalty of Peru, and from 1776 as capital of the new Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.[80] Despite its name, the region contained no silver ("plata"), nor other precious metals, and its economy was restricted mainly to the interior and trade with nearby Brazil and Cuba; geographical isolation furthered a sense of political marginality. Buenos Aires declared its independence from Spanish rule on 25 May 1810, with the rest of the Viceroyalty following suit on 9 July 1816; Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay seceded from the union, and the new state of Argentina was formed. Interior provinces remained largely independent from Buenos Aires following independence, prompting decades of domestic military conflict (under Rosas) to eliminate regional authorities. Aggression against neighbouring countries also led to a French-British blockade of Buenos Aires for much of the 1840s, cutting Buenos Aires off from major trading partners. Rosas was finally overthrown in 1852, and a written constitution was drafted the following year; during the succeeding three decades the country gradually moved towards being a fully-fledged nation state. In 1880 Buenos Aires was finally declared the federal capital – La Plata becoming the regional capital of Buenos Aires province – and a new era of political and economic stability was ushered in. In a sense, Argentina was finally born.

The British had long had an interest in the region, having sought to invade Buenos Aires in 1806-7; and following the overthrow of Rosas British investment started to flood the

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[79] Lind gave ninety-five concerts over a nine-month period, earning $200,000 under P.T. Barnum's management; she pursued a further, independently managed tour the following year. As Dizikes suggests, "It is the beginning of a long period in which American money devastated the Italian operatic system in particular, the Italians finding it harder and harder to compete with the growing American market" – a line of argument he explores only in a US context. *Opera in America*, 126-38; cited passage 134.

[80] Details in this and following paragraphs are to be found in many standard histories of the country. See for example David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonisation to the Falklands War and Alfonsín* (London: Tauris, 1987); and Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

country. The first British-funded railway tracks were laid in the 1850s, at the same time as the construction of the Teatro Colón; a second upsurge of British capital came in the 1880s, (following a brief economic downturn around 1873), and in 1890 the railway network extended to 5,800 miles; the British had by then invested £157 million in the Argentine economy.[81] Exports could be shifted quickly from the interior to the port and factories of Buenos Aires, and a series of export booms promptly took place: wool (from the 1860s); then wheat and other cereals (from the 1880s); and finally cattle, which after 1900 could be chilled or frozen for export to Europe via steamships. The Partido Autonomista Nacional remained in power between 1874 and 1914 – dominated by figures of the so-called *generación de ochenta* – and favoured an agricultural export economy alongside strict social conservatism; cultural nationalism would become increasingly belligerent after 1900, as anxieties about social fragmentation grew, and patriotic symbols began to dominate primary education and civic events.[82] Industrialisation was largely restricted to the capital and a largely neo-colonial economy emerged, in which (as David Rock has argued) local elites worked with foreign investors to maintain control over national exports. Desire for total control of the interior had already given rise to the "Conquest of the Desert" during the 1870s, when indigenous communities were exterminated and land ownership handed over to porteño elites; and economic and political hierarchies between Buenos Aires and the interior hardened further as the capital city boomed. Under mayor Torcuato de Alvear, Buenos Aires would undergo a massive re-development from the 1880s onwards, with the construction of the Avenida de Mayo connecting all major government buildings from the Plaza de Mayo to the Congress, new parks and boulevards being built, and improved drainage and lighting facilities being installed. By the 1890s, local elites resided in mansions to the north; poor citizens would cluster in the city centre and the south, as well as in the Italian port district of La Boca.[83] A desire to participate in a broader European project of modernisation drove local and national government policy: rather than being an isolated former colony, Argentina would claim its position as a major Western superpower.[84]

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[81] Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987*, 118-61.
[82] David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930: The Rise and Fall of Radicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotias, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas. La construccion de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo del Cultura Economica, 2001).
[83] James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).
[84] The key work in this ideology – familiar to all students of the period – is *Facundo: Barbarism and Civilisation* (1845), by later president Domingo Sarmiento, which contrasts the barbarism of the unpopulated pampas with the civilisation of Buenos Aires, and by extension Europe. As historians have argued, however the reality of the late nineteenth century was more mixed: notwithstanding successive governments' liberal fiscal policies and preoccupation with notions of social progress, the economy of Argentina remained fundamentally

Foreign investment and trade led to demand for immigration, and from the 1880s émigrés arrived in extraordinary numbers. Between 1871 and 1914, nearly 6 million people entered Argentina, of whom more than half stayed; over 40% of these came from Italy, with the rest mainly made up by arrivals from Spain, France, Portugal, and Russia. Buenos Aires's population accordingly ballooned. In 1869 it had been only 177,000 (41,000 were Italian); by 1895 it was nearly 670,000, and by 1914 it was more than 1.5 million; at the outbreak of the Great War, foreign-born men outnumbered native men in the city.[85] The government had licensed campaigns to encourage immigrants to travel for work in 1862, but land ownership was highly restricted and most immigrants moved to cities for factory work. Universal male suffrage was not granted until 1916; compulsory state education had been introduced earlier, in 1880, yet economic divisions remained vast across the city and country, and most immigrants lacked the right to vote. As Samuel Baily has shown, the sustained rate of Italian immigration from the 1860s did help to smooth adjustment processes for new arrivals, however: Italian émigrés to a large extent developed the Argentine middle class, taking up jobs as shopkeepers, tailors, manufacturers, doctors and musicians, as well as working in factories.[86] A major depression in 1890 slowed down immigration rates, but the economy and population rates soon picked up: by 1914, Buenos Aires was not only the largest city in Latin America, but Argentina's per capita income was on a par with Germany: the nation was firmly among the ten wealthiest countries on the planet.

Already in the 1820s, Italian opera had been linked to ideas of European civilisation and cultural progress; and such ideas would continue throughout the following decades, even as opera circulated widely in many other forms. By the 1870s, Buenos Aires had emerged as a regular early stop for new Italian operas, with impresarios responding to reduced finances available to theatres within Italy (and capitalising on the difference in hemisphere).[87] *Aida* received its first non-Italian and non-Egyptian performances in Buenos Aires in October 1873; New York followed only a month later, while Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, Paris and London all waited until 1874-6.[88] The old Teatro Colón was complemented by a number of

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colonial and the creation of a democratic public sphere was stunted by the oligarchy. See Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930.*

[85] See Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987*, 162-72.

[86] Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*.

[87] On this shift, see again Nicolodi, "Opera Production".

[88] See Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*, 1597-1940 (London: John Calder, 1978; third edition), 1018-9. A similar pattern played out with *La forza del destino* (1862; revised version 1869) and Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* (1876), with both operas appearing in Buenos Aires and New York early in their international careers. By contrast, *Il trovatore* (1853) and *La traviata* (1853) had both appeared in many other European capitals before crossing the Atlantic; and Rio de Janeiro preceded them as the first American city for both operas.

smaller theatres, and by the late 1880s the city could offer multiple performances of the same repertoire on a single evening: the "night of the three *Rigoletto*s" in May 1910 became legendary.[89] The range of theatres also catered for different audiences and funding models. The Colón was funded by a combination of subscription, public subsidy and ticket sales, and could rely on municipal favour; when the new theatre was commissioned in the mid-1880s, the site was gifted by the local government.[90] While favoured by local elites, tickets at the Colón were also available to the middle classes, and the new theatre's vast size meant it could accommodate a wide range of visitors.[91] During the Colón's closure between 1887-1908, its position as the most prestigious theatre was taken over by the Teatro de la Ópera (opened in 1872) with management moving from one to the other. The vast Politeama (holding up to 4000, and opened in 1879) was less financially restrictive, as was the Teatro Doria (opened in 1887; later renamed the Marconi); the latter in particular was favoured by Italian émigrés. Alongside the regular seasons at the Teatro Nacional and Teatro de la Ópera, many small theatres also provided opera by visiting troupes and local performers, making opera available to a wide range of audiences in different venues and at different price points. Throughout the period, Italian opera co-existed with French and German repertoire, Spanish zarzuela, and native composition, with the latter growing in public prominence by the early 1900s as cultural nationalism began to take hold. But Italian repertoire had by far the widest dissemination and the most ingrained history in the city; and it flourished throughout Argentina's boom years (1880-1914) as the Italian population soared.

New York's emergence as a major global capital was more gradual, but like Buenos Aires the period from the 1870s onwards marked a major upsurge in the city's economic and cultural position. With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, New York had quickly consolidated itself as the nation's key port, linking both the USA with Europe, and connecting Northern and Southern US states. The development of a national rail network during the 1840s furthered this, as goods from the interior (particularly wheat and cotton) were brought to the city for export; by 1850, New York had become so pre-eminent among

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[89] See César Dillon & Juan A. Sala, *El Teatro Musical en Buenos Aires: Teatro Coliseo 1907-1937/1961-1998* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Art Gagliacone, 1999), vii. The theatres were the Colón, Ópera and Coliseo.
[90] On the construction of the new Colón, see John E. Hodge, "The Construction of the Teatro Colón", *The Americas* 36/2 (1979), 235-55; see also Claudio E. Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011), 17-38. The theatre's construction was notoriously expensive and protracted, with one of the architects even being murdered.
[91] Control of the construction process and new theatre was given over to impresario Angelo Ferrari. Italian-born but locally based, he had managed the old Colón since 1868, and would run the Teatro de la Ópera until his sudden death in 1897, whereupon his wife Amelia Posi took over. See Hodge, "The Construction of the Teatro Colón".

North American commercial centres that "she may call Ohio her kitchen, Michigan her pastures, and Indiana, Illinois and Iowa her harvest fields", in the words of one contemporary commentator.[92] Demand for American imports surged with failed harvests in Ireland and continental Europe, and with shipping costs decreasing, the docks were rapidly expanded: by 1849 over three thousand ships entered New York's harbour per year, from 150 foreign ports, and bringing half the USA's imports (and over a third of the nation's exports leaving by this route).[93] As money poured in from California, finance became ever more important, with over 80% of the nation's banks keeping their depositories in the city by the 1850s.[94] Manufacturing and populations levels also boomed: small businesses were established alongside large factories, from furniture to Henry Steinway's piano company, and by mid-century the city was the nation's unrivalled clothing and publishing centre; in 1860 the metropolitan area's population (including suburbs) reached over 1 million.[95] The civil war (1861-5) caused major economic and social unrest in the city, despite its physical distance from warfare, but from the 1870s the city's economy was once again thriving: in 1885 the USA had the world's largest share of manufacturing output; by 1900 the country's energy consumption exceeded that of Germany, France, Russian, Japan, Austro-Hungary and Italy put together.[96]

A new city charter passed in 1870 moved control of municipal policies into the hands of the Tammany Hall elite, a corrupt Democrat coterie who nonetheless embarked upon a massive programme of public and cultural projects during the so-called Gilded Age (1870-1914). Central Park was completed in 1873; the Metropolitan Museum of Art had opened the previous year; Carnegie Hall followed in 1891. The economic divides that characterised the period – symptomatic of the "incorporation of America", in Alan Trachtenberg's classic formulation – were reflected in urban geography, as mansions constructed around the park by

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[92] Cited in Edward K. Spann, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 15. A major account of New York's economic development during the nineteenth century can be found in Edwin G. Burrows & Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York city to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 649-73; see also Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-96* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and David M. Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

[93] See Burrows & Wallace, *Gotham*, 653.

[94] Ibid., 657.

[95] The five districts of present-day New York – Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island – would not be incorporated until 1898, with a population of over three million: see Burrows & Wallace, *Gotham*, 1219-36.

[96] See Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 46.

the Vanderbilt family (and the like) contrasted with densely populated tenement blocks in the south; by 1890 the Lower East Side was one of the most densely populated places on the planet.[97] Immigration from Ireland and Germany had massively enlarged the city since the 1850s, but from the 1870s Italian emigration began to increase substantially, with a modest population of 12,223 in 1880 (1% of New York's population) more than trebling by 1890 (39,351, in a city of around 1.5 million); and reaching 145,344 in 1900 (4.2% of the city's 3.4 million population).[98] By the outbreak of the Great War, New York's Italian population had reached 370,000; at the same time, Buenos Aires had 312,000, albeit in a city that was less than half the size in population of New York.[99] Unlike in Buenos Aires, Italian arrivals were free to vote, but the more rapid rate of emigration undoubtedly made the adjustment process more difficult; fewer Italian institutions were initially in place to aid arrivals, and a greater proportion were male, uneducated and from the Italian South than in Argentina. A two-class social system thus developed, divided between *prominenti* – wealthy immigrants who ran businesses and newspapers, and would support Italian cultural projects to promote positive images of Italy – and low-paid workers, many of whom would return home.[100] But as in Buenos Aires, New York would become the clear Italian-American capital in its continent. By 1914 a quarter of all Italian émigrés living in the USA would be in New York; a third of those in Argentina would be in Buenos Aires.[101]

An expanding bourgeois elite had made a new opera house inevitable, and the Metropolitan Opera House eventually opened in 1883 (with a performance of Gounod's *Faust*).[102] Privately built and financed by subscriptions and ticket sales, the Met's first season was run by Henry Abbey and offered a mixture of Italian, German and French repertoire, with star singers including Christine Nilsson. Financial pressures induced in part by celebrity Italian singers led to seven seasons of opera in German, before the 1890s witnessed a return to a mixed-language repertory and a host of star singers: from Nellie Melba, Sybil Sanderson

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[97] This was documented by photographer Jacob Riis in 1890 in his photo journal *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Scribners, 1890). On the move to private business models throughout North American society, see Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), especially 101-81.
[98] Statistics cited in Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*, 58.
[99] Ibid., 9.
[100] The role of the Italian émigré press in shaping diasporic "imagined communities" and in promoting Italian culture was crucial. See Peter G. Vellon, *A Great Conspiracy against our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); and Federica Bertagna, *La stampa italiana in Argentina* (Rome: Donzelli, 2009).
[101] Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*, 10.
[102] For a recent history, see Charles Affron & Mirella Jona Affron, *Grand Opera: The Story of the Met* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).

and Emma Calvé, to Jean de Reszke, Victor Maurel, Francesco Tamagno and (after 1903) Enrico Caruso. Competition from the Met closed down the Academy of Music's opera season in 1886, but many visiting Italian troupes and English-language companies nonetheless thrived – offering lower-priced productions and in many cases staging local premieres of major new Italian works at venues such as the Casino Theatre. Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House offered a further challenge from 1906, ensuring that the city had an operatic life whose prestige and diversity could strongly challenge those to the East and South; the growth of the gramophone industry offered a further boost.

The American Century

A sense of New York's and Buenos Aires's new-found cultural significance has been a mainstay of previous studies of the two cities' operatic life during this period. These have emphasised the richness of the cities' musical cultures – and the desire to match (imagined) European standards of excellence – while highlighting the rise of musical nationalism in both Argentina and the USA. Monographs by Roberto Caamaño, Néstor Echevarría, César Dillon and Juan Sala, Pedro Rivera, and Gustavo Gabriel Otero and Daniel Varacalli Costas have all explored aspects of operatic life in Argentina throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – chronicling performances in some key theatres and emphasising the close relationship between Argentina and Europe in this period, without examining the reception of particular works, composers, performers or ideologies in detail.[103] The most substantial studies of Italian opera's reception history during this period have come from John Rosselli and Anibal Cetrangolo, both of whom have examined the relationship between the established Argentine elite and Italian immigrants in relation to Italian opera. In a landmark article from 1990, Rosselli examined the arrival of Italian opera in Argentina in light of nineteenth-century shipping advances and changing theatrical tastes within Europe (which encouraged many comic opera singers and less-renowned performers to relocate to Latin

[103] Roberto Caamaño, *La historia del Teatro Colón, 1908-1968* (Buenos Aires: Cinetea, 1969); Néstor Echevarría, *El Arte Lírico En La Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Imprima, 1979); Pedro Rivera, *Caruso en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Estudios Avanzados,1994); César Dillon & Juan A. Sala, *El Teatro Musical en Buenos Aires: Teatro Doria – Teatro Marconi* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Art Gagliacone, 1997); Dillon & Sala, *Teatro Coliseo;* Gustavo Gabriel Otero & Daniel Varacalli Costas, *Puccini in Argentina, June to August 1905* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Instituto Italiano de Cultura de Buenos Aires, 2006). They join much earlier studies by Mariano G. Bosch and Vicente Gesualdo that usefully outline key periods in Argentina's musical history, but that in Gesualdo's case is also coloured by a strongly nationalist agenda: see Bosch, *Historia de la Ópera en Buenos Aires*; and Vicente Gesualdo, *Historia de la Musica en la Argentina, 1536-1900* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Beta, 1961).

America).[104] Outlining a number of performance circuits around North and South America, Rosselli highlighted the expanding and socially differentiated audiences for Italian opera during the late nineteenth century, and concluded that emerging nationalism during the First World War, economic crises, musical internationalism and the eventual assimilation of the Italian population all resulted in the decline of Italian dominance by the 1920s.

In his recent monograph (as well as a forthcoming follow-up), Cetrangolo has built upon Rosselli's work to argue for a radical paradigm shift in Buenos Aires's operatic life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: from an avidly Italophile culture among the elites in the mid to late nineteenth century, to a growing rejection of Italian cultural models in the wake of Italian mass immigration.[105] Cetrangolo emphasises the major social and cultural capital Italian opera held for wealthy elites, and contrasts this with the deeply patriotic attitude held by recent Italian émigrés in Argentina, for whom opera was (in his view) a rich symbol of national belonging: its importance demonstrated by its circulation among the Italian community in the form of street music and bands, as well as émigrés' attendance at the opera. He accordingly paints a portrait of dramatic social conflict played out at the opera house, in which prejudice towards impoverished immigrants is similarly directed at Italian repertory – above all verismo – and Italian operatic models fall out of public favour; the quasi-colonial attitude adopted by some Italian operatic cartels is a further aggravating factor.

Both of these studies have deeply enriched our understanding of Buenos Aires's musical life at this time: in particular the influence of Italian operatic cartels by the early twentieth century, and opera's importance in identity formation among the Italian diaspora. Yet many important questions remain unanswered. Neither Rosselli nor Cetrangolo examine the impact of new forms of operatic production and consumption – such as stagings, touring composers, and communication technologies, and a shared international repertory – on operatic reception at this time; and the impact of direct material connections between operatic life in Italy and Argentina is thus generally overlooked in favour of ideological conflicts. The predominant focus on the Teatro Colón also gives only a partial overview (and critical

[104] John Rosselli, "The Opera Business and the Italian Immigrant Community in Latin America 1820-1930: The Example of Buenos Aires", *Past and Present* 127/1 (1990), 155-82

[105] Anibal E. Cetrangolo, *Opera, Barcos y Banderas: El Melodrama y la Migración en la Argentina* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015). This monograph (and its successor) are both derived from Cetrangolo's doctoral dissertation: "Opera e identidad en el encuentro migratorio: El melodrama italiano en Argentina entre 1880 y 1920" (PhD dissertation, University of Valladolid, 2010).

examination) of the rich operatic life in the city at this time; the sections in Cetrangolo's dissertation dealing with wider operatic dissemination focus largely on the presentation of performance data. More problematically, the emphasis in Cetrangolo's study on binary distinctions between national and diasporic identities risks obscuring the extent to which identities were overlapping; and as a consequence, the ways in which Italian opera evaded easy distinctions between national and foreign – and the processes by which these operatic identities were formed – tend to recede into the background.[106] Overall, the historiographical approach pursued by both Rosselli and Cetrangolo, a largely Marxist one informed by Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural distinction, seeks clear connections between socio-political and operatic developments: with ethnic and socio-political tensions replayed around the opera house.[107] The following chapters instead suggest a more complicated picture: one in which Italian opera functioned as an agent of continuity as much as a symbol of political conflict; and in which ideas of *italianità* were re-shaped and defined through new forms of operatic encounter.

Similar questions are raised by previous studies of New York's operatic history. Karen Ahlquist has examined the history of opera in New York during the antebellum and immediate postbellum periods, highlighting emerging debates about "highbrow" culture and the morally-improving nature of music theatre.[108] Around the late nineteenth century, John Graziano has demonstrated the diversity and sophistication of the city's musical life, while restricting transnational perspectives largely to questions of musical competence and range.[109] More recently, Daniela Smolov-Levy has investigated attempts to "democratize" opera in twentieth-century America, and the diverse presentational formats bound up with such moves, without concentrating upon Italian opera or the early twentieth century in particular.[110] Her study builds upon Katherine Preston's pioneering work on English-

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[106] Some of these issues are raised by María Cáceres-Piñuel in her review of Cetrangolo's book: see *Verdi Perspektiven* 1 (2016), 214-6. On musical cosmopolitanism, see Martin Stokes, "On Musical Cosmopolitanism", *Macalester International* 21 (2008) 3-26; and Ignacio Corona & Alejandro L. Madrid, eds., *Postnational Musical Identities: Cultural Production, Distribution, and Consumption in a Globalized Scenario* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2008).

[107] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[108] Ahlquist, *Democracy at the Opera*; and "Mrs Potiphar at the Opera: Satire, Idealism and Authority in Post-Civil War New York", in *Music and Culture in America, 1861-1918*, ed. Michael Saffle (New York: Garland, 1998), 29-49.

[109] John Graziano, ed., *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840-1900* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006).

[110] Daniela Smolov-Levy, "Democratizing opera in America, 1895 to the present" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2014).

language operatic performances in the nineteenth-century USA, which in a similar fashion has focused on efforts at "cultural uplift" through opera without pursuing a specifically transnational or urban approach.[111] Charles and Mirella Affron's recent history of the Metropolitan Opera House, and Martin Mayer's older account both trace the debates that have surrounded the theatre's repertoire, while a number of studies by Joseph Horowitz have highlighted opera's role in disseminating ideas of cultural progress – particularly Wagner.[112] Overall, these investigations have stressed the increasingly elite social position of opera in the city, and highlighted the prestige of German repertoire, without investigating the reception of Italian opera in significant detail.

The most sustained exploration of the topic has instead come from Davide Ceriani, who has examined the career of Giulio Gatti-Casazza in New York (intendant of the Metropolitan Opera House between 1908 and 1935), as well as some of the patriotic sentiments directed by the Italian diaspora towards opera following Gatti's appointment.[113] In an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ceriani explores the anxieties elicited in the New York critical community by the appointment of Gatti-Casazza, amid fears that he would transform the theatre into a centre for Italian opera. As Ceriani demonstrates, Gatti-Casazza did indeed seek to promote new Italian operas at the Met, despite public pronouncements to the contrary; and Ceriani examines the critical reception of Franchetti and Wolf-Ferrari's operas during the 1910s in light of critical biases in favour of German repertoire.[114] In a freestanding essay – part of an ongoing study of opera among the Italian-American diaspora – Ceriani underlines the feelings of ethnic pride and solidarity felt by émigrés in response to performances of *Aida* and Franchetti's *Germania* at the Met in 1908 (largely pursuing a similar approach to Cetrangolo). A recently-published article by historian Stefano Luconi likewise outlines the

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[111] Preston, *Opera on the Road*, and *Opera for the People: English-Language Opera and Women Managers in Late 19th-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), especially 496-552.
[112] Affron & Affron, *Grand Opera*; Martin Mayer, *The Met: One Hundred Years of Grand Opera* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983); Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Horowitz, *Moral Fire: Musical Portraits from America's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
[113] Davide Ceriani, "Italianizing the Metropolitan Opera House: Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Era and the Politics of Opera in New York City, 1908-1935" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2011); and Ceriani, "Opera as Social Agent: Fostering Italian Identity at the Metropolitan Opera House During the Early Years of Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Management (1908-1910)", in *Music, Longing and Belonging: Articulations of the Self and Other in the Musical Realm*, ed. Magdalena Waligórska (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 114-35.
[114] In his concluding chapter – one that extends well beyond the timeframe of this dissertation – Ceriani examines Gatti-Casazza's relationship with Mussolini and the consequences this had both for the large number of Italian performers and composers presented at the Met in the 1920s, and for Toscanini's relationship with New York.

diasporic pride and social aspiration behind the construction of the Verdi statue in New York in 1906.[115]

Ceriani's focus on the Met and its critics reveals much about the institution's internal politics; and the theatre's importance to the city's cultural life can hardly be dismissed. And yet his attention on one theatre alone inevitably leaves many questions about the broader cultural history of Italian opera in New York unexplored. While critics clearly expressed concern about Gatti-Casazza's appointment, Italian opera also flourished well beyond the walls of the Met, in ways that challenge the representative status of certain prominent journalists, as well as easy associations between Italian opera and elite culture. In light of his focus on institutional politics, new operatic media such as touring productions and recordings also do not feature prominently in Ceriani's account, while the attention to the period after 1908 leaves the preceding years largely unexplored. This earlier period has in fact received more sustained attention from Larry Hamberlin, via his study of operatic ragtime parodies, which underlines Italian opera's popular familiarity in New York during the late nineteenth century.[116] Yet Hamberlin's emphasis on musical analysis ultimately leaves the reception history of operatic performances unaddressed. Overall, and in spite of these studies, the period from the late 1880s to 1914 has remained relatively overlooked, with critical attention – as in Argentina – instead mainly focused on the emergence of a nativist repertoire.

This dissertation seeks to revise that situation. As the following chapters suggest, far from being in retreat, Italian opera remained at the centre of these two cities' operatic identities, interacting in complex ways with perceptions of New World modernisation and trans-continental power dynamics. Rhetoric of American ascendancy frequently cast Italy and Italian opera in familiar terms, deploying tropes established by earlier generations of European travellers and intellectuals; but these images co-existed with a distinctly new set of operatic conditions, in which Italian opera was every bit as innovative as German, French or "native" repertoire. New modes of industrial production promised an unprecedently integrated operatic world, that Italian opera significantly helped to shape; Italian operatic

[115] Stefano Luconi, "Opera as a Nationalistic Weapon: The Erection of the Monument to Giuseppe Verdi in New York City", *Italian Americana* 34/1 (2016), 37-64. A related approach is being pursued by Siel Agugliero (in his in-progress doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania) examining the history of Italian opera among the Italian diasporic community in Philadelphia. On Philadelphia's Italian community, see also Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

[116] Larry Hamberlin, *Tin Pan Opera: Operatic Novelty Songs in the Ragtime Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially 3-70.

repertory was increasingly characterised by its canonicity and even extinction, amid contemporary rhetoric of American modernisation; and the explosion of mass society generated hardening distinctions between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" culture, in which Italian opera occupied a pivotal role. If "modernity" per se was not new in the late nineteenth century, it was certainly *was* in full flow, and constituted an epistemological and social shift in which the Americas occupied a crucial cultural and imaginative role.

At first glance, the pairing of New York and Buenos Aires promises a series of binaries that have been well-studied (and critiqued) by musicologists in other contexts: between Anglo-Saxon and Latin musical cultures; between German symphonic and Italian operatic repertoire; and between Protestant and Catholic religious traditions.[117] As Maike Thier has argued, by the 1830s and 1840s perceptions of a marked cultural and racial difference between North and South America had already become pronounced, with formulations in that vein by French intellectuals circulating throughout Europe and Latin America.[118] "The two branches [of Europe], Latin and German, are reproduced in the New World. South America is Latin and Catholic like Southern Europe. North America belongs to a Protestant and Anglo-Saxon population", argued Michel Chevalier in 1836.[119] By the 1880s, perceptions of the USA as potentially aggressive – heightened by the Mexican-American War in 1846-8 – were intermingling in Argentina with older ones of it as a fellow republican example, and an economic model to emulate. Musical contrasts could also easily be drawn. Buenos Aires certainly had a more extensive operatic culture than New York, as well as a much higher percentage of Italian immigrants; while the latter had more symphonic concerts – there was no Argentine equivalent to Carnegie Hall. But these binaries soon splinter upon closer scrutiny. Anglo-Saxon and German culture were widespread and revered in Argentine elite circles, thanks to the government's economic policies; and Italian émigrés founded many of Buenos Aires's societies for instrumental music.[120] Nor can an image of exclusively Beethoven and Wagner-loving New Yorkers be sustained any more than it can

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[117] On German-Italian binaries as they have played out in the reception of Beethoven and Rossini, see Nicholas Mathew & Benjamin Walton, eds., *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[118] Maike Thier, "A world Apart, a Race Apart?", in *America Imagined: Explaining the United States in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America*, ed. Axel Körner, Nicola Miller, & Adam I.P. Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 161-89.
[119] Michel Chevalier, *Lettres sur l'Amérique du Nord* (Paris: Ch. Gosselin, 1836), cited in Thier, "A world Apart, a Race Apart?", 161.
[120] On the role of Italian émigrés in shaping Argentina's orchestral and chamber music culture, see Anibal E. Cetrangolo, "Aida Times Two: How Italian Veterans of Two Historic Aida Productions Shaped Argentina's Musical History", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 28/1 (2016), 79-105.

for citizens of Bismarck's Germany.[121] In what follows, I argue, New York and Buenos Aires are remarkable as much for their similarities as for their differences; set against Italy, they also looked to one another.

Writing Transatlantic Operatic History

The methodological approach of this dissertation is clearly influenced by earlier studies of opera and urbanisation, as well as by investigations of nineteenth-century urban modernity by historians and urban geographers including Anthony Giddens, Richard Dennis, and Richard Terdiman; accounts shaped in turn by seminal studies by Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and the Frankfurt School.[122] All of these have encouraged this dissertation's aim to offer a "thick description" of operatic life in these cities, uncovering opera's relationship with a variety of social practices and mentalities.[123] At the same time, they have refined this study's definition of modernity, understood as a perception of a radical break with the past, and newly "disembedded" relations to both time and space; and characterised by heightened degrees of mechanical repetition and fluid social relations.[124] A more recent move towards comparative and global urban studies has also been influential, particularly edited collections by Andreas Huyssen, Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen.[125] Axel Körner's recent investigation of the USA within Risorgimento intellectual history has likewise shaped this study's approach in significant ways, underlining the country's allure (and distastefulness) for Italy as a democratic republic and an imagined locus of technological modernity and progress.[126]

This dissertation's ambition to situate Milanese and Italian self-representations within a transnational framework is also informed by recent operatic studies of Italian depictions of the Americas. John Paul Russo, Emanuele Senici and Laura Basini have all explored images

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[121] See again Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans*, 39-84.
[122] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; first edition 1974); and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011; first edition 1984).
[123] The expression "thick description" was popularised by Clifford Geertz *in The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30, but first articulated by Gilbert Ryle. The phrase here suggests the aim to pursue relationships between operatic and wider cultural discourses.
[124] See particularly Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 1-54.
[125] Huyssen, ed., *Other Cities, Other Worlds*; and Saunier & Ewen, eds., *Another Global City*.
[126] Körner, *America in Italy*.

of the USA within Puccini's operas, while Pierpaolo Polznonetti has pursued similar issues within eighteenth-century opera buffa.[127] But in view of my study's specific timeframe, musicological studies by Alessandra Campana and Richard Leppert have been especially significant, in addition to Kreuzer's *Verdi and the Germans*: the former via Campana's focus on structural shifts within the Italian operatic industry around 1900; the latter by Leppert's attention to epistemological changes associated with the rise of modernism, particularly distinctions between "technology" and "nature" (influenced in turn by Friedrich Kittler).[128] As the following chapters show, these were binaries into which "America" and "Italy" could be slotted all too easily in an American critical context, even as Italian opera's cultural persistence strongly challenged such a move.

My focus in the following chapters on operatic reception encouraged an organisation based on chronological case studies, each examining different modes of cultural transfer (and their impact on definitions of Italian opera and *italianità*). Inevitably, archival accessibility has also shaped its outline and conclusions. Newspapers and periodicals, institutional records, letters, photographs, travel accounts, legal documents, civic and government records, illustrations and scores all contribute significantly, with the printed press taking pride of place. In all three cities, however, archival obstacles have had to be surmounted. In Buenos Aires theatrical archives have largely been destroyed, and other relevant documentation (such as civic records) is dispersed and highly fragmentary.[129] In New York institutional records are also relatively limited, while in Milan access to certain archives has been restricted. Beyond specific archival challenges, mobility is – as several scholars have noted – an elusive object of study, one that resists the sometimes easy formulations of imagined historical fixity.[130] But as I aim to show, the movement of materials and ideas undoubtedly informed operatic discourse and practice on both sides of the Atlantic. "Even a footprint indicates an animal's passing", historian Carlo Ginzburg has argued, in a critique of quasi-scientific, "anti-anthropocentric" methodology applied to the humanities: "[the] question arises[…]whether exactness of this [scientific] type is attainable or even desirable for forms of knowledge most

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[127] John Paul Russo, "Puccini, the immigrants and the golden west", *The Opera Quarterly* 7/3 (1990), 4-27; "Manon Lescaut and the Myth of America", *The Opera Quarterly* 24/1-2 (2008), 62-81; Emanuele Senici, *Landscape and Gender in Italian Opera: The Alpine Virgin from Bellini to Puccini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 228-62; and Polzonetti, *Italian Opera in the Age of the American Revolution.*
[128] Campana, *Opera and Modern Spectatorship*; and Richard Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies of Modernity, Subjectivity and Nature: Opera, Orchestra, Phonograph, Film* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).
[129] Further materials from theatres may survive in private hands, but operatic seasons at the Ópera have had to be reconstructed from surviving newspapers; there is no published history of the theatre.
[130] See Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006); and John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

linked to daily experience".[131] This study endorses a similar hunting for clues, pursuing the footprints of transatlantic operatic exchange.

Chapter One examines the first production of Verdi's *Otello* (1887), and its subsequent tour to both Buenos Aires and New York. Verdi's first Italian operatic premiere since *Un ballo in maschera* (1859), the Milan world premiere was the object of intense media scrutiny within Italy and abroad, prompting a plethora of accounts of the bonds between Verdi, opera, Milan and Italy. Widely expected to be Verdi's final opera, *Otello* unsurprisingly came laden with canonic expectations (especially as a setting of Shakespeare); and the principal singers were the object of strong public interest within Milan, with Francesco Tamagno's powerful Otello and Victor Maurel's nuanced Iago both attracting detailed praise. At the same time, the production was the basis for an unprecedentedly detailed staging manual, which aimed to preserve many of the most important elements of the production for future performance.

Otello soon travelled to both Buenos Aires and New York, in advance of many European capitals, and received a series of productions that in various ways sought to recapture the original Milanese staging. Expectations surrounding the opera had been heightened by regular telegrammed news reports, which - like the staging manual - seemed to point to new experiences of simultaneity and mechanical reproduction by the late 1880s. The arrival of *Otello* was marked by a heightened awareness of these issues – particularly in light of recent operatic and urban developments in both American cities – while being attuned to Verdi's "national" status amongst Italians. Tamagno's Otello emerged as a sticking point in many reviews, however: an element considered fundamental to Verdi's conception, yet whose uniquely powerful voice appeared to resist future reproduction. Turning to later accounts of the opera in Milan, I consider how American perceptions of Tamagno's uniqueness and Verdi's Italian status were (further) internalised, in ways that point to the intertwinement of national mythologies with new technological media.

Chapter Two turns to the double bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890) and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892) – a pairing famously, if apocryphally, first presented at the Metropolitan Opera in 1893. Mascagni's one-act opera was a huge critical and public success at its Rome premiere in May 1890, capitalising on a widespread interest in the economically-

[131] Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm", in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, trans. John & Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989; revised edition 2013), 87-113; cited passages on 112 and 94.

impoverished Italian South. Discussions of the *mezzogiorno* received heightened impetus from the increasing waves of Italian emigration, with New York and Buenos Aires ever more important destinations as the 1890s progressed. Mascagni's opera went on tour across Italy, receiving a variety of critical responses, and provoked a number of new one-act Southern operas, including *Pagliacci*. Premiered in Milan in 1892, Leoncavallo's opera was coolly received by local critics, but nonetheless received widespread critical attention from American critics, encouraging it – like *Cavalleria* – soon to cross the Atlantic.

Mascagni's famed opera received a number of English and Italian language performances in the Americas during 1891, with its depiction of Southern passion and violence, and its stylistic development attracting attention from both local and diasporic publications. On *Pagliacci*'s arrival, the operas were quickly paired together, and became a regular feature in the operatic life of the two American cities. In the context of huge Italian immigration and a highly internationalised operatic repertory, I demonstrate, they became a focal point for wider discussions of Italian identity, and of Italian opera's position within the entrenched cultural hierarchies of the time: ones in which distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow were being negotiated; and Italian opera shifted between social allegiances and degrees of social capital. A closer examination of the double-bill's performance history in these cities ultimately challenges easy connections between operatic and urban history. Turning back to Milan, I consider an alternative to more familiar narratives of rejection and anti-Southern prejudice: one shaped by the long-term impact of American ideas of *italianità*.

Chapter Three considers Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904), a work famously concerned with encounters between the New World and the Old. I examine the opera in the context of Puccini's 1907 tour to New York, and the overlapping forms of Italian-American interaction in which it was embedded, before re-considering some key moments in the opera itself in this light; this chapter thus contains the most sustained passages of musical analysis in the dissertation. Invited by the Met for a festival of his operas, Puccini's visit followed the disastrous La Scala premiere of *Butterfly*, and a subsequent extended visit to Buenos Aires. Puccini's latest opera depicted an exploitative vision of the USA; and the New York tour reflected a longer engagement with the USA's culture on the composer's part. For New York critics, meanwhile, Puccini's tour was framed against earlier visits by Italian composers, while the reception of both Puccini and *Butterfly* was coloured by wider understandings of Italian opera and sentimentality – ones that even inflected Puccini's media persona.

At the same time, the emergence of gramophone opera recordings offered an alternative model of transatlantic encounter, as Italian operatic voices were increasingly mediated through American technology. At one level, opera gramophone discs promised new forms of operatic consumption, as celebrity singers could be enjoyed in the home. Yet opera discs also promised a specifically American form of operatic experience, I demonstrate, one that was the source of considerable cultural and legal controversy. Examined in that context, *Madama Butterfly*'s plot and opposing sound worlds can be heard as a meditation on broader Italian-American tensions – ones shaped by discourses of Italian vocality and American materialism. This chapter therefore unfolds in three main parts: after an introductory exploration of *Butterfly*'s acoustic imagination, I turn to the transatlantic travels of both the opera and its composer, before examining the early operatic gramophone industry. In the final section, I return to *Butterfly*, to pursue traces of these debates within the opera's own dramaturgy.

Chapter Four focuses on the Milan Exposition of 1906, considering its musical and more broadly cultural activities within a transatlantic perspective. This chapter therefore moves away from a direct geographical focus on the Americas to consider their imaginative role within Milanese cultural life. The first international exposition in Italy, the 1906 event was of major local, national and international significance, and intended to highlight the progress Milan (and Italy) had made since the 1880s. It was notable also for its focus on Latin America and the Italian émigré community; while musical highlights included a celebrated revival of Verdi's *La traviata* (1853). First staged at La Scala a few months earlier to mark the fifth anniversary of Verdi's death, the production comprised the first production of Verdi's opera in period costume, with a creative team featuring soprano Rosina Storchio and conductor Leopoldo Mugnone: a pairing by then famous for their performances in Latin America.

I examine the relationship between the Milan exposition and the La Scala production, considering the similarities between these two forms of theatrical practice. If the exposition sought to reflect a specifically Milanese experience of global space, productions could at times operate in similar ways, offering uniquely complex configurations of the past, present and future – ones that reflected local experiences of *italianità*. In the context of a globalised operatic canon, and shifting power relations between Italy and Argentina, I suggest, operatic staging emerges as a significant discursive space for negotiating transatlantic relations.

Finally, Chapter Five considers constructions of the Italian-American operatic canon in the years immediately preceding the Great War. I focus on two especially prominent Italian novelties in Buenos Aires and New York: Mascagni's *Isabeau* (1911) and Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re* (1913). Premiered at the Teatro Coliseo as part of a widely publicised South American tour by the composer, *Isabeau* received a mixed response from critics, but enjoyed extraordinary levels of media coverage and continued to be performed at a time of growing critical interest in defining an Argentine national music. Montemezzi's opera, meanwhile, was warmly received at its La Scala world premiere in April 1913 but received ecstatic reviews at its Metropolitan Opera premiere the following year. This would herald a remarkable performance history of the opera in the city, one that approached the status of a local operatic masterpiece unmatched by Puccini's own commissions for the theatre.

The reception of these two operas outlines efforts by both critics and managements to shape a specifically Italian-American operatic canon, I suggest: one that could effectively stand in for local musical compositions. Turning back to the operas' Italian reception, I examine the competing strategies by which critics sought to engage with the challenge posed by foreign premieres, at a time of heightened interest in Italy's own musical history. As such, this comparative study can illuminate the legacy of national constructions in today's Italian operatic repertory and invite alternative ways of mapping Italian operatic history.

Ultimately, this dissertation argues for the durability of longstanding ideas of *italianità* in this period, but also explores their reinvention. Familiar ideas surrounding Italy were reworked through new media and new voices, a process in which local and national identities were continually redefined. Thus the "bygone modernity" of my title is deliberately plural. At one level, it refers to Italian opera itself: venerable yet remade in an industrial era. It also suggests how the "New World" self-consciously fashioned itself through continuities (as well as ruptures) with the Old, with Italian opera a crucial agent. But it gestures likewise towards Italy and Milan – a place seeking to fashion a modernity in dialogue with longstanding foreign images of *italianità.* In what follows, ideas of progress and the past are deeply entwined with foreign perspectives: urban (and national) identities are fundamentally dialogic. It was not only the Italian past that was a foreign country, to borrow a phrase:

considered from an explicitly geographical perspective, it was also the present, and for Italy, perhaps even the future.[132]

[132] L.P. Hartley's phrase also forms the title for David Lowenthal's classic study of cultural heritage: *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Chapter One

Otello, Tamagno, and Verdi's Sounding Object

In 1907, the music historian and former impresario Gino Monaldi looked back at the premiere of Giuseppe Verdi's *Otello* at La Scala two decades earlier. In Monaldi's account, the event was "one of the most important theatrical solemnities of the century", and memorable not least for the extraordinary impression made by tenor Francesco Tamagno in the opera's title role: "Tamagno-Otello appeared a revelation, then became a portentous legend, so much so that today, around twenty years later, it is more alive than ever before. What Tamagno was able to do in *Otello*, were it not true, would otherwise be impossible to believe."[1] Monaldi had published the first detailed overview of Verdi's entire career in 1899, and in both sets of writings he stressed the intense public interest that had surrounded *Otello*'s premiere, as well as Verdi's marked stylistic development from the 1850s onwards. In his earlier monograph, Monaldi also highlighted the triumph *Otello* had been for Tamagno and baritone Victor Maurel at its premiere.[2] Yet by the early twentieth century, Tamagno's total identification with the role had taken on near-mythical proportions in Monaldi's mind, offering a daunting challenge to future generations:

> From 1887 until four or five years ago Tamagno and Otello appeared like two almost indivisible beings, so intimate and immediate were the connections between the singer and the role. At the time when composers were writing for singers they would certainly have said that Verdi had imagined Otello thinking of Tamagno; but we who are writing history have to say instead that one of the concerns of Verdi, after having written *Otello*, was in fact finding a protagonist after his own heart. The choice of Tamagno was one that Verdi had to make sadly and with resignation only for want of a better alternative. After the first evening, however, Verdi made amends for his mistake, by kissing Tamagno onstage and proclaiming him "a Moor more legendary than that of old." "Ah! What misery! – said Verdi – nobody will ever be able to sing it like him!"[3]

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[1] "Tamagno-Otello apparve una rivelazione, divenuta poi leggenda portentosa, tanto che oggi, dopo circa venti anni, essa è più viva di prima. Ciò che Tamagno ha saputo fare nell'*Otello* è cosa che, se non fosse vera, non sarebbe credibile." Gino Monaldi, *Cantanti celebri del secolo XIX* (Roma: Nuova Antologia, 1907), 259.

[2] "Sino dalla prima rappresentazione di Milano, tutto avevano detto che non sarebbe stato possibile vedere e udire in seguito uno Jago non interpretato da Maurel, nè un protagonista anche non fosse il Tamagno." Gino Monaldi, *Verdi, 1839-1898* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1899), 260.

[3] "Dal 1887 sino a quattro o cinque anni or sono Tamagno e Otello sono apparse due cose quasi indivisibili, tanto intimi e immediati erano i contatti fra il personaggio e il cantante. Al tempo in cui i compositori scrivevano per i cantanti sarebbesi certamente detto che il Verdi avesse immaginato Otello pensando a Tamagno; invece noi che scriviamo per la storia dobbiamo anzi dire che una della preoccupazioni di Verdi,

Monaldi's description of *Otello*'s premiere is of a piece with the elegiac tone of much of his history of nineteenth-century singers: one that portrays the early twentieth century as nothing less than the end of operatic singing. "After Verdi the confusion of languages is at its peak. In the kingdom of song there exists no more respite. Anarchy is complete […] Blessed old times indeed, in which art and the theatre were the throbbing heart of the people and made us forget the bitterness of long and painful days. Those times are no more!"[4] Yet perhaps even more striking than this nostalgia for the operatic past is Monaldi's sense that from the moment of its premiere *Otello* had been an opera whose reception was suffused with concerns about its relationship to history. For Monaldi, Verdi's compositional methods had been entirely in tune with the times in their disregard for individual performers; and *Otello* was an opera expected immediately to enter the operatic canon alongside Verdi's earlier works, and whose musical contents fascinated "the whole civilised world".[5] The role of Otello, however, was so peculiarly well-matched to its original interpreter (and his famously powerful voice) that later generations could never successfully banish Tamagno's shadow from their performances. Indeed, Monaldi himself appears to have succumbed to temptation: the comments attributed to Verdi are almost certainly apocryphal, and nowhere to be found in reviews of the premiere. More than an interpretation, in fact, "Tamagno-Otello" had become a myth, even a curse – a figure almost inseparable from Verdi's famous opera, and whose presence became only more powerful with the passing of time. Thus the historian's task by 1907 was to reassure readers that *Otello* need not perish alongside the recently deceased Tamagno, and his authorially-sanctioned interpretation.[6]

Monaldi's emphasis on the "solemnity" and national importance of *Otello*'s world premiere echoes many more recent accounts of Verdi reception in late nineteenth-century Italy. As studies by Birgit Pauls, Roger Parker, Emanuele Senici and Laura Basini have all

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dopo avere scritto l'*Otello*, fu invece quella di trovare un protagonista a suo modo. La scelta di Tamagno il Verdi dovette subirla a malincuore e rassegnarvisi solo per mancanza di meglio. Dopo la prima sera però il Verdi fece ammenda del suo errore baciando il Tamagno sulla scena e proclamandolo un 'Moro più leggendario ancora di quello antico'. 'Ah! quella Miseria mia! – Verdi – nessuno saprà mai gridarla come lui!'" Monaldi, *Cantanti celebri del secolo XIX*., 261-2.

[4] "Dopo il Verdi la confusione delle lingue è al colmo. Nel già regno del canto non esiste più alcuna legge. L'anarchia è completa […] Vecchi tempi beati invero, in cui l'arte e il teatro facevano palpitare il cuore d'una moltitudine e le facevano dimenticare le amarezze di lunghe e penose giornate. Quei tempi non sono più!" Ibid., 306-7.

[5] "Che cosa sarà quest'*Otello*? […] E la voce interrogativa di quel problema si ripercoteva in quel momento sopra tutto il mondo civile." Ibid., 250. On the decline of parts written specifically for singers, see Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[6] Tamagno had passed away in 1905, at the unexpectedly young age of 55; chronic heart problems had plagued him during his later career. For an overview, see Ugo Piovano, *Otello Fu: La vera vita di Francesco Tamagno il "tenore cannone"* (Milan: Rugginenti, 2005).

demonstrated, discourse surrounding the composer in Italy (and particularly Milan) during the 1880s and 1890s repeatedly positioned him as a musical father figure for the nation: one closely associated with the Risorgimento movement, and who could be included in a lineage of Italian heroes as part of a broader nation-building project.[7] The composer himself was an active participant in this process: Verdi accepted an honorary position from Cavour in the Italian parliament in 1861, and by 1881 a statue of Verdi had been installed in the foyer of La Scala alongside Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. More recently, Francesca Vella – in line with accounts by Senici and Axel Körner – has emphasised the extent to which Verdi and his works could be imagined as part of a modernising (as well as historicising) agenda in this period, with works such as *Don Carlo* and the *Messa da Requiem* negotiating between a variety of styles and being interpreted in light of competing urban imperatives.[8] Monaldi's focus on *Otello*'s international media profile introduces a further (complementary) set of overlapping interests: ones that resonate with Ricordi's 1885 speech. If *Otello* was at one level a pre-ordained Verdian classic – a work whose premiere was of local and national significance – the La Scala opening was also an event followed by musical centres throughout the world, and audiences quickly expected to witness productions of *Otello* in their own theatres, including in New York and Buenos Aires.

In recent years, a number of scholars have drawn attention to broader shifts in Italian operatic production in the late nineteenth century, which reflected Italian opera's involvement in the emergence of a culture industry.[9] Fiamma Nicolodi and John Rosselli have both underlined the heightened importance of music publishers such as Ricordi, in light of copyright laws and the declining power of impresarios. Media historian Fausto Colombo has suggestively analysed wider commercial developments within Italy in terms of a divide between pedagogical material and early forms of mass entertainment.[10] More recently,

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[7] See Birgit Pauls, *Giuseppe Verdi und das Risorgimento: ein politischer Mythos im Prozess der Nationenbildung* (Berlin: De Gruyter,1996); Roger Parker, *Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati: The Verdian Patriotic Chorus in the 1840s* (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1997); Emanuele Senici, "Verdi's 'Falstaff' at Italy's Fin de Siècle", *The Musical Quarterly* 85/2 (2001), 274-310; and Laura Basini, "Reviving the Past: Italian Music History and Verdi" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2005).

[8] Francesca Vella, "Verdi Reception in Milan: Memory, Progress and Italian Identity" (PhD dissertation, King's College London, 2014).

[9] On structural changes within the Italian opera industry and new ideas of operatic commodification, see John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Fiamma Nicolodi, "Opera Production from Italian unification to the Present", in *Opera Production and its Resources*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi & Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Lydia D. Cochrane (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998; Italian edition 1987), 165-228.

[10] Fausto Colombo, *La Cultura sottile: Media e industria culturale in Italia dall'ottocento agli anni novanta* (Milan: Bompiani, 1998; fifth edition 2016), 9-36, especially 15-22.

Alessandra Campana has drawn upon Colombo's arguments to argue for a co-existence of these models at La Scala: both via its programming, and through its complex mechanisms for disseminating cultural products. Campana draws renewed attention to the *disposizione scenice* as a means of unifying and controlling both the staging and the audience's collective response.[11] As Campana presents them, these staging manuals aspired to a quasi-Foucauldian control of a public, regulating its responses and seeking to cultivate a set of endlessly reproducible aesthetic encounters. *Otello* is notable in this respect for the unprecedented size and detail of its staging manual, pushing the textualisation of the work and its first performances to a new level; indeed, Campana highlights uncomfortable parallels between Iago's artifice and *Otello*'s own theatrical machinery.[12] In a related vein (and moving outside Italy) Gundula Kreuzer's recent exploration of Wagnerian stage technologies has emphasised the extent to which the "regulatory concept" of the musical work (in Lydia Goehr's words) began to inform operatic production during the later nineteenth century, particularly as new operatic stagings went on tour within Europe and beyond.[13] Within Italy, the first operatic transfer had taken place in 1871, with the relocation of Bologna's production of Wagner's *Lohengrin* – its Italian premiere – to Florence.[14] By 1887, such ambitions had also begun to shape transatlantic transfer, with *Otello* in prime position for lavish treatment. *Otello*'s international dissemination was a process in which the La Scala production and its original cast were closely involved, with Tamagno in particular travelling throughout Europe and the Americas together with multiple stagings. New York and Buenos Aires were amongst the first stops on *Otello*'s international journey, preceding London and Paris by several months (or years, in the case of the French capital), and the host to the opera's premieres on their respective continents, in a clear sign of their increasing operatic importance.[15]

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[11] Alessandra Campana, *Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late-Nineteenth Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially 1-14.

[12] Ibid., 106-142. James Hepokoski pursues a related (if less anxious) line of argument, claiming that Verdi's attitude towards *Otello* was thoroughly Idealist: "Verdi composed *Otello* with concrete images of its realization in mind […] All of the performances and interpretations that he saw fell short of it, like shadows on the cave-wall". See his *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 90. For an early study of *Otello*'s staging manual, see Doug Coe, "The Original Production Book for 'Otello': An Introduction", *19th-Century Music* 2/2 (1978), 148-58.

[13] Gundula Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018). On the "regulative concept", see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[14] See Francesca Vella, "(De)railing Mobility: Opera, Stasis, and Locomotion on Late-Nineteenth-Century Italian Tracks", *The Opera Quarterly* 34/1, (2018), 3–28.

[15] A pirated version of the score drawn from the piano and vocal score was presented in Mexico City in November 1887, preceding the premieres in Buenos Aires and New York; see Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi, Otello*, 119. *Otello* toured German-language theatres in Germany and Austria in early 1888, although naturally without the original cast; see again Hepokoski, 128.

From that perspective, Monaldi's perception of friction between *Otello*'s canonical status and Tamagno's centrality to Verdi's conception can serve as a productive entry point to consider a broader set of questions about the transatlantic impact of an emerging operatic culture industry. The Tamagno-Otello myth exists on the cusp between two different conceptions of musical production and even of different conceptions of musical history: between an ideal of reproduction and canonicity, aimed at infinite circulation; and of the fleeting and individually-tailored – "the time when composers were writing for singers". As Kreuzer has argued, "the enduring association of a particular work with one set of specific visual ideas and material practices […] complicates the notion of what defines an opera"; it uncovers elements not included in the authorial text that were nevertheless understood in their time to be intrinsic to the work's identity. As such, these associations can provide a lens on a broader set of cultural myths, by raising historiographical questions over how and why "certain visions of a work-as-staged came to dominate the public mind and how they have played out over time".[16] "Tamagno-Otello" gestures towards a nexus of concerns about Italian operatic practices during this period, ones in which the image of Verdi himself appears implicated.

In what follows, therefore, I treat *Otello* as a test-case to explore the implications of an emerging Italian operatic culture industry – and specifically touring productions – for operatic reception in these American cities in the late 1880s. Verdi's opera offers an especially productive lens for such an investigation by virtue of its instant fame, its complex historical significance, and its ambiguous place between the mechanically reproduced and the "live". In both New York and Buenos Aires the *Otello* productions were the object of intense local media interest that followed from the sustained attention to Verdi's opera around its La Scala premiere. And in both cities *Otello* was presented in multiple productions in short succession, both with and without Tamagno, provoking lengthy critical discussion of the opera's theatrical challenges and Tamagno's complex involvement with them. *Otello* first arrived in Buenos Aires in June 1888, in a production organised by Cesare Ciacchi at the Politeama theatre and was swiftly followed by one at the Colón organised by Angelo Ferrari – an operatic competition that was also a much-reported legal battle. New York first heard *Otello* in April 1888 in a tour organised by tenor-turned impresario Italo Campanini, with

[16] Gundula Kreuzer, "Wagner-Dampf: Steam in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Operatic Production", *The Opera Quarterly* 27/2-3 (2011), 179-218; quotations from 180-1.

Tamagno making his Met debut in the role in 1890. Productions at the Met starring Jean de Reszke and Tamagno continued in later years, offering a range of staging models.

As this chapter will seek to show, *Otello* provided a key opportunity for critics and audiences in both American cities to assess their relationship with Milan, in particular as touring productions were part of a broader media network sustained by increasingly rapid and detailed telegrammed news reports. In that respect, new forms of transatlantic operatic mobility – specifically rapid news reports and touring stage productions – participated in shaping emerging ideas of global simultaneity, while also being inseparable from changing power relations. As Stephen Kern has argued, improved transport and communication technologies had by the 1880s begun to encourage new perceptions of collective temporal experience, rooted in expanded perceptions of geography; and it was a development in which experiences of time itself became newly complex: "[t]he sense of the present was […] thickened temporally with retentions and protentions of past and future and, most important, expanded spatially to create the vast, shared experience of simultaneity."[17] If these ideals co-existed with more fractured realities, they also highlighted changing relations in a transatlantic operatic economy. The swift transfer of *Otello* thus pointed to a new global status for New York and Buenos Aires; and yet this was also just the latest stage in their interaction with Verdi's latest opera, fuelled by Ricordi's extraordinary campaign to broadcast Verdi, La Scala and *italianità* direct from the *capitale morale*.

Verdi, Media, History

The premiere of *Otello* at La Scala was without doubt the most highly anticipated event of the Milanese musical season, and indeed the entire decade.[18] Journalists from across Europe and the USA came to report on the event; the city mayor closed the area around La Scala to traffic on the day itself; crowds thronged the streets after the performance to celebrate the composer.[19] Reviewing the twentieth performance – a date carefully picked to allow for assessment of the music away from the surrounding media excitement – Eduard Hanslick

[17] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983; second edition with new preface, 2003), 314.
[18] For a general study of the premiere's context, see Thomas Forrest Kelly, *First Nights at the Opera* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 314-63; for a valuable overview of the opera and its history, see Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello.*
[19] Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Verdi: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 688; and *The Musical Times* 529, 1 March 1887.

observed: "It is a remarkable sign of the times that the most prominent newspapers in France, England, Germany, and even America, sent their own correspondents to Milan in the midst of winter, in order to report the success of *Otello* and even send telegrams after each act. Where else has anything happened like that before?"[20] In an article published two days before opening night, Milanese journalist Alessandro Casati attempted to capture the mood in (and beyond) the city:

> It's impossible to describe the extraordinary anticipation of the Milanese population and the entire musical world for the new work by the illustrious Verdi: it's an earnest desire, a craving, a frenzy […] many notable musicians and journalists from Italy and abroad are coming for the event […] it will be an artistic celebration such as we have not encountered in musical history and I anticipate – with all the certainty of not suffering disappointment – that the new opera by the *swan of Bussetto* will be another masterpiece, and will add another jewel to the crown that rightly already adorns the forehead of the greatest representative of Italian musical glory.[21]

Excitement surrounding the premiere had spread throughout Milan like a fever, Casati argues; and the ambiguous slippage in his account between *Otello* the opera and the hype surrounding the premiere – an "artistic celebration" that involved music lovers across the globe – underlines the crucial role of publicity in shaping the reception of Verdi's opera. In this atmosphere of collective delirium, the object of aesthetic wonder became both the work itself and the surrounding media event: a perception that slid seamlessly into nationalist rhetoric. Opera lovers could thus become participants in an unprecedented artistic event, one shadowed by the weight of the past and the future, spotlighting Milan as the centre of a global musical web, and Verdi's position as the pre-eminent Italian composer.

When *Otello* finally arrived on 5 February 1887, critical adulation for Verdi's final work was assured. A new production of *Aida* had already opened the La Scala season on 26 December 1886, featuring all three of the *Otello* principals in the opera for the first time, and

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[20] Eduard Hanslick, review of *Otello* published in *Die moderne Oper, iv. Musikalisches Skizzenbuch*, 319-35; reprinted in *Verdi's Otello and Simon Boccanegra in Letters and Documents,* ed. and trans. Hans Busch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Vol. 2, 709-16; cited passage 709.

[21] "Non è possibile discrivere la straodinaria aspettazione della popolazione milanese e di tutti il mondo musicale pel nuovo lavoro dell'illustre Verdi; è un desiderio vivo, una smania, una frenesia addiritura in tutti […] moltissime notabilità musicale e giornalistiche italiane ed estero verrano a Milano per la circonstanza […] Sarà insomma una festa artistica che non avrà riscontro negli annali della musica ed io mi augoro – con tutta la convinzione di non patire disinganno – che la nuova opera del *cigno del Busseto* sia un altro capolavoro ed aggiunga una novella splendidissima gemma al diadema che già meritamente orna la fronte del più rappresentante della gloria musicale italiana." Alessandro Casati, *Gazzetta dei teatri*, 3 February 1887, 2.

in the opera's first La Scala revival since the 1870s. Expectations in Milan were intensified by the recent history of Italian opera at La Scala. Since *Aida* sixteen years earlier, Verdi had concentrated largely upon revisiting older musical works, with *Simon Boccanegra* and *Don Carlo* both premiering in their revised forms at La Scala during the 1880s, while the *Requiem* had debuted at Milan's San Marco Cathedral in May 1874. Verdi's last Italian operatic premiere, however, had been *Un ballo in maschera* in Rome (1859); *Aida* had arrived at La Scala only after its performances in Cairo. In the intervening years, successful new Italian works had been notably few – Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* (1876) was a rare exception – and concerns about the current health of the Italian operatic repertoire had been sounded out for several decades.[22] Audiences were thus primed for a further canonical masterpiece – both in terms of Verdi's own history, and that of the nation. As with *Falstaff* six years later, rhetoric was hyperbolic, with journalists proclaiming the opera's greatness and intrinsic *italianità* in extravagant terms.[23] "Now Giuseppe Verdi, a multifaceted and understanding mind, has been able to unite the truths of modern art and given the century its musical masterpiece, obtaining in this way the most splendid of his victories", declared the journal *Paganini* shortly after the premiere, in a comparison with Wagner. "An extraordinary man who ascends from triumph to triumph to such a height, illuminated by the genius of Michelangelo and guided by the conquering power of Garibaldi, in whom nature has sculpted the features of his face to be so sweet, so austere, so noble!"[24] In the context of quasi-national celebrations, the military rhetoric in reviews – as well as in the opera's own plot – was surely significant. Italy had sustained its first colonial defeat in January 1887, in Dogali (then Ethiopia), and the promotion of heroic, military masculinity shaped much of public discourse as Italy sought to develop its international profile.[25] *Otello*'s downfall could tap into broader concerns about the failings of the unification project and the threats posed by modernity: indeed, both James Hepokoski and Roger Parker have interpreted *Otello* as a covert dramatisation of the conflicts

[22] See Carlos del Cueto, "Opera in 1860s Milan and the End of the Rossinian Tradition" (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2011).
[23] For a summary of early performances, see Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello,* 118-38. On *Falstaff*'s premiere, see Senici, "Verdi's 'Falstaff'".
[24] "Ora Giuseppe Verdi, mente multiforme e comprensiva, ha saputo riunire le verità dell'arte moderna e ha dato al secolo il capolavoro musicale, ottenendo così la più splendida della sue vittorie. Uomo straordinario che ascese di trionfo in trionfo a tanta altezza, illuminato dal genio di Michelangelo e guidato dalla potenza conquistratrice di Garibaldi, dei quali natura trasfuse i lineamenti nel suo volto così dolce, così austero, così nobile!". L. Montaldo, "Verdi e Wagner", *Paganini* 3 (March 1887), 11-12.
[25] For an overview, see Sandro Bellassai, "The Masculine Mystique: Antimodernism and Virility in Fascist Italy", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10/3 (2005), 314-35.

of Italian musical modernity – caught between declamatory and old-fashioned lyrical styles, and centred upon the psychic collapse of the title character.[26]

One obvious precedent for *Otello*'s media storm was the opening of Bayreuth in 1876, and the subsequent premiere of *Parsifal* (1882). But with Wagner deceased, Verdi could easily dominate international attention. Questions about *Otello*'s relationship to Wagner unsurprisingly shadowed much of the journalistic discussion – particularly in light of Verdi's reformulation of *ottocento* structures and incorporation of more sustained orchestral motifs – but Milanese critics were quick to defend Verdi from charges of imitation or being behind the times.[27] Overall, the Milanese (and Ricordi-sponsored) publicity and criticism around the opera seemed designed to affirm its immediate place in the "operatic museum", notwithstanding the modern media campaign: an opera that could both take its place among the Italian masterpieces of the past, while being composed for repeated listenings in the future.[28] Verdi and Boito's Shakespearean source material already reinforced the sense of *Otello* as an instant classic. Shakespeare had been a favourite writer of Mazzini (who proclaimed him as a democratic symbol), while Francesco De Sanctis – Liberal Italy's Education Minister and foremost intellectual – had given a famed series of lectures on Shakespeare's plays in the 1850s.[29] Ricordi's *Otello* publicity pursued this historicising agenda further. Actors Ernesto Rossi and Tomasso Salvini were both acclaimed interpreters of the title role in Italy and abroad, and associations between Tamagno's Otello and Salvini in *Verdi e l'Otello* – a special issue of *L'illustrazione italiana* published in February 1887, with Ricordi's support – sought to place Verdi's opera within a longer lineage of Shakespeare reception (see Fig. 1.1); Verdi had reportedly taken both Tamagno and Maurel to a performance of Shakespeare's play during the rehearsal process.[30] Overlaps between *Otello*

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[26] Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello*, 187-9; and Roger Parker, *The New Grove Guide to Verdi and His Operas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 222.

[27] On *Otello*'s forms, see Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi, Volume 3: From Don Carlos to Falstaff* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; second edition 1992), 332-98; Roger Parker and Matthew Brown, "Ancora un bacio: Three Scenes from Verdi's *Otello*", *19th-Century Music* 9 (1985-6), 50-62; and Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello*, 139-62.

[28] On the emergence of the operatic canon in Italy, see Rosselli, *The Opera Industry*, 170-7. On the idea of the operatic canon, see for example William Gibbons, *Building the Operatic Museum: Eighteenth-Century Opera in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2013); and the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook to the Operatic Canon*, ed. Cormac Newark & William Weber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). On instrumental music, see for example William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[29] On Shakespeare in Italy, see Enza de Francisci & Chris Stamatakis, eds., *Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange: From Early Modern to Present*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017). The choice of *Otello* as a source had been Ricordi's suggestion, first advanced in 1879; financial pressures appear to have encouraged Ricordi to push Verdi for a new work.

[30] *Verdi e l'Otello: numero unico pubblicato dalla Illustrazione italiana* (Milan: Treves, 1887).

and Verdi's recently revised works also increased a sense of historicity. Tamagno and Maurel had both appeared in the premieres of *Simon Boccanegra* and *Don Carlo* during the 1880s, and their remote historical settings inevitably invited similar scenographic choices in *Otello* on the part of set and costume designer Alfredo Edel.[31] Most obviously, the staging manual published shortly after the premiere positioned *Otello* as a stable theatrical text destined for repeated performance, and preserved many of Verdi's directions to the performers during rehearsals. "It is *absolutely* necessary that the artists understand the production book completely and conform to it", urged librettist Arrigo Boito in the manual's introduction. "The producer should, in due time, inform the scenic artists, the stage technicians, the costumer, the prop. man, the head of lighting, the director of extras, etc., of the instructions relating to them which are contained in the present book […] Likewise, managements should not allow changes of any kind in the costumes: these have been carefully researched and copied from contemporary pictures, and there is no reason why they should be changed according to the whims of this or that artist."[32] Boito's vehemence doubtless reflected worries that the manual would be ignored, while insisting that *Otello*'s staging should be as canonical as the score.[33]

Verdi's choice of singers had provoked much discussion in the months preceding the premiere, and Tamagno, Maurel and soprano Romilda Pantaleoni were all regular singers at La Scala. Maurel was a highly respected collaborator with Verdi and had sung Amonasro in the New York and Paris premieres of *Aida*; as Karen Henson has suggested, he may have exercised a significant influence in persuading Verdi to return to operatic composition via his mediation of new theatrical trends, and his casting as Iago was almost inevitable.[34] Pantaleoni appears to have been more problematic. By the late 1880s her voice was in decline, and many early reviews commented on her difficulties in sustaining Desdemona's long lines. Tamagno's status was more ambiguous: his close working relationship with Verdi throughout the 1880s cemented a personal connection between the two men, but Verdi expressed

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[31] *Simon Boccanegra* was presented at La Scala in 1881; *Don Carlo* appeared in 1884. On the return to these earlier scores, see Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 656-74. *Simon Boccanegra*'s premiere at the 1881 National Exhibition meant that a wide array of publicity resources was available to advertise the opera's return, but the scale of publicity was far less than for *Otello* six years later. On the premiere of the revised *Boccanegra*, see also Campana, *Opera and Modern Spectatorship*; and Francesca Vella, "Milan, Simon Boccanegra and the Late-Nineteenth-Century Operatic Museum", *Verdi Perspektiven* 1 (2016), 93–121.

[32] Busch, *Verdi's Otello and Simon Boccanegra,* 488: the entire staging manual is reprinted 483-665.

[33] On the staging manuals as a reaction against alternative theatrical approaches, see Roger Parker, "Reading the Livrets, or the Chimera of 'Authentic' Staging", in *Leonora's Last Act: Essays in Verdian Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 126-48.

[34] Karen Henson, *Opera Acts: Singers and Performance in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 19-47.

concerns to Ricordi about his suitability for the role's more restrained moments; subtlety had not been his forte. Yet Tamagno's involvement with revisions of two of Verdi's earlier operas did place him – like Maurel – as a key figure in Verdi's remaking of the operatic past: a performer whose vocal power seemed to resonate with Wagnerian repertoire increasingly popular in Italy; and yet whose repertory choices in practice remained centred exclusively upon Italian and French works: *Il trovatore*, Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Donizetti's *Poliuto* and the grands opéras of Meyerbeer were among his war horses.[35] Famed for his exceptional vocal power, he was undoubtedly the foremost Italian dramatic tenor of the time; and his unusual vocal abilities surely encouraged Verdi to pursue *Otello* as a subject matter.[36] An engraving by Antonio Bonamore of Act Two Scene V in *Verdi e l'Otello* (and modelled on Tamagno and Maurel) seems to evoke this power in the conflict between Otello and the prostate Iago: a statue of a roaring lion's head mirrors Otello's expression, as a curtain in the lower right-hand corner flutters in response to his outburst; the tenor's arms are outstretched, as though steadying himself to deliver vocal flames from his mouth (see Fig. 1.2).[37]

Fig. 1.1. *Verdi e l'Otello*, special issue of *L'illustrazione italiana*, March 1887.

[35] On Tamagno's earlier career, see *Il titanico oricalco: Francesco Tamagno* (Turin: Teatro Reggio Turino, 1997); on *Otello* specially, see Giorgio Gualerzi's entry, "Esultate! Otello c'è: si chiama Tamagno", 27-40.
[36] For an argument in this direction, see John Potter, *Tenor: The History of a Voice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 59-62.
[37] *Verdi e l'Otello.*

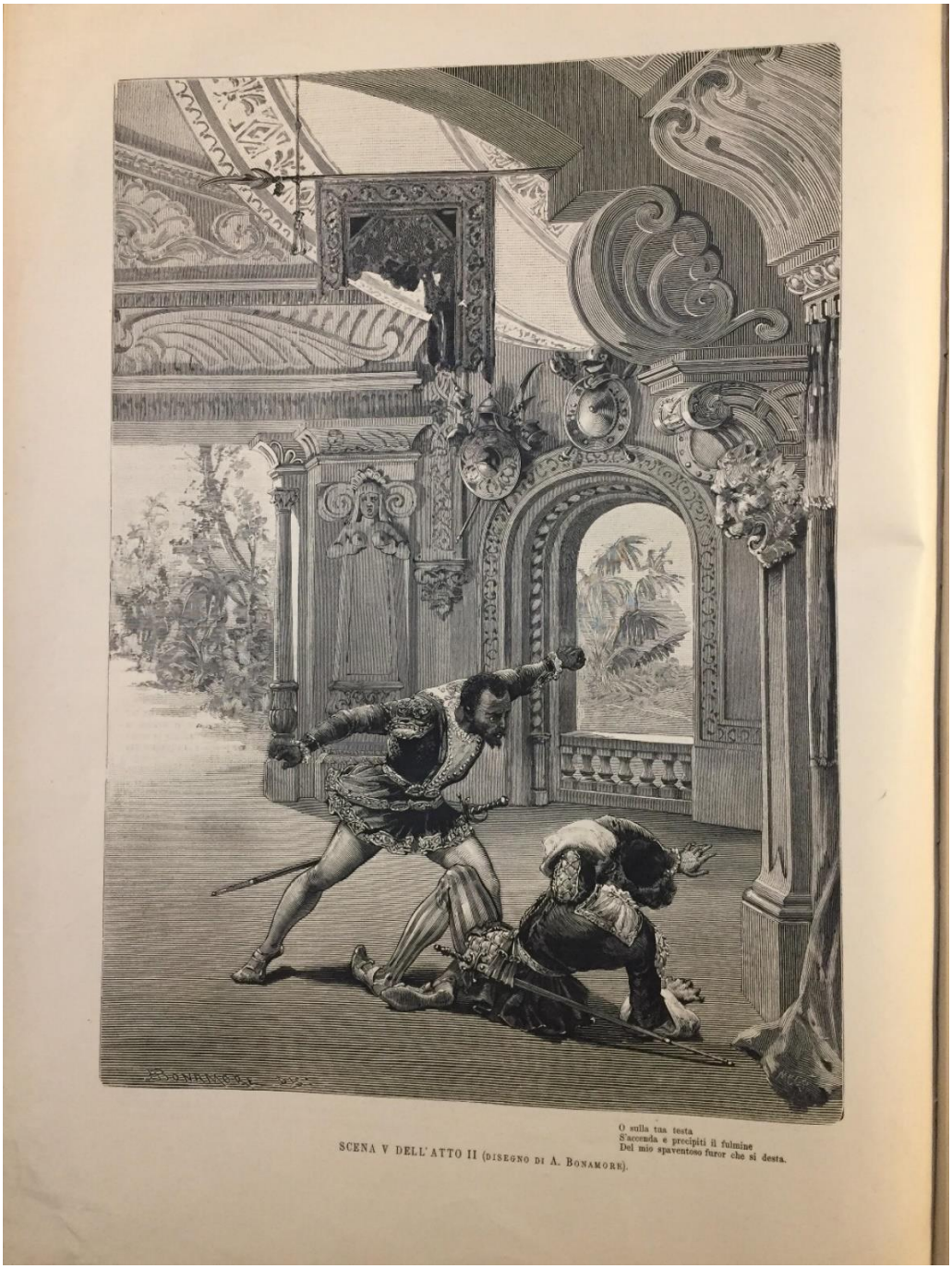

Fig. 1.2. Antonio Bonamore engraving, Act 2 Scene 5, *Verdi e l'Otello*

In light of the expectation surrounding the work, reviews of the Milanese premiere generally focused on Verdi's compositional style. But Tamagno's improvement as a singing actor did come as a welcome surprise: "As for Tamagno, one can say that he will not have many rivals in this most difficult part", remarked *L'Italia* after the second performance. "I have never been an idolator of his top C, but I must recognise that he does not owe his success in this part just to that. He sings and acts nearly always very well, and in the final act

he is a true, effective and admirable artist."[38] Reports coming from the theatre in previous weeks had warned of the tenor's ongoing problems with a throat infection, which also delayed the second performance.[39] In light of this, Milanese journalists at the premiere were as preoccupied with Tamagno's vocal volume as with his dramatic commitment; but after the second night, attention started to shift to individual performances. "Tamagno gave to the part of Otello, both as a singer and as an actor, all of its importance, so as to remove it from the shadow in which it had been the first night, and to bring it bravely to the forefront of the picture", declared *Il pungolo*. "Yesterday it was no longer possible to doubt the true protagonist of the opera. – The true protagonist of Verdi's work, as in Shakespeare's, is Otello."[40] *Il secolo* likewise noted that "Tamagno, perfectly restored to health, displayed all the treasures of his splendid voice, making in more than one place universal wonders. The beautiful pronunciation of this tenor and his phrasing allow him to interpret effectively the wild and vigorous part of the protagonist".[41] Doubts about Tamagno's dramatic credibility (and his capacity to dominate proceedings alongside Maurel) were thus silenced by his progress as a singing-actor through Verdi's intervention. Questions about future replacements, however, were largely ignored; the myth of "Tamagno-Otello", and Tamagno's irreplaceability, was not born overnight.

Attention to the opera's staging and cast became more evident when the opera embarked upon a tour of northern Italy shortly after its La Scala premiere, a journey that included Rome, Venice and Parma and incorporated the entire La Scala staging (with varying degrees of modification). Tamagno's illness caused financial difficulties for various houses as audiences favoured performances with him, and replacements Franco Cardinali and Giuseppe Oxilia were often found lacklustre.[42] Reviews that circulated in the months after the premiere

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[38] "Quanto al Tamagno, si può dire, che non avrà molti rivali in questa parte faticosissima; non sono mai stato un idolatra dei suoi *do*, ma devo riconoscere che non soltanto a questi deve il suo successo in questa parte. Egli canta ed agisce quasi sempre egregiamente, ed all'ultimo atto è un vero ed efficace ed ammirabile artista". E. Zorzi, *L'Italia*, reprinted in '*Otello': dramma lirico in quattro atti, versi di Arrigo Boito, musica di Giuseppe Verdi. Giudizi della stampa italiana e straniera* (Milan: Ricordi, 1887), 80-1.

[39] Ugo Pesci, "Rehearsals for *Otello*" in *Verdi e l'Otello;* also reprinted in *Interviews and Encounters with Verdi*, ed. Marcello Conati, trans. Richard Stokes (London: Gollancz, 1984), 184-7.

[40] "Il Tamagno diede alla parte di Otello, come cantante e come attore, tutto il suo rilievo, così da toglierlo da quella penumbra in cui era rimasto la prima sera, e da portarlo gagliardamente nella prima linea del quadro. Iersera non era più possibile alcuna dubbieza sul vero protagonista dell'opera. – Il vero protagonista nel lavoro di Verdi, come in quello di Shakespeare, è Otello." *Il pungolo*, reprinted in '*Otello': Giudizi della stampa italiana e straniera*, 76.

[41] "Tamagno, perfettamente ristabilito in salute, spiegò tutto il tesoro della sua splendida voce, facendo in più di un punto le meraviglie universale. La bella pronuncia di questo tenore e il suo fraseggiare gli permettono di interpretare efficacemente la vigorosa e selvaggia parte del protagonista." *Il secolo*, reprinted in '*Otello': Giudizi della stampa italiana e straniera*, 78.

[42] Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello*, 118-9.

also indulged in rhetoric similar to that found in Milan, suggesting the desire for smaller operatic cities to align themselves with international operatic discourse; indeed, Ricordi compiled many of the first reports into a volume published in March 1887 as a special issue of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* – a move that canonised *Otello*'s early reception history alongside the work, while providing a model for later responses. The geographical scope of the volume's local and visiting journalists – Paris, London, Milan – likewise preserved a familiar operatic geography alongside critics' responses, one that did not necessarily match *Otello*'s own performance history. As the production moved around, public interest in the precise reproduction of the La Scala staging (including Tamagno) suggests a heightened sensitivity to the opera's challenges as performance and specific medial status: a concern for reproduction that paradoxically marked this reception as even more historically aware than the Milanese one. The specific means by which *Otello* travelled through the Italian peninsula are especially revealing. As Federico Spolaor and Francesca Vella have shown, the Rome performances in April 1887 – the first performances of the opera after the La Scala run – were bolstered by a publicity campaign orchestrated by impresario Guglielmo Canori, that centred upon the transfer of the entire production – singers, chorus, orchestra, costumes and sets – by a specially-chartered train: one that could carry all the necessary props and that did not stop at intermediary stations.[43] The "treno *Otello*" emphasised the heightened interconnectedness between Italian cities by the late 1880s, and tied Verdi's new opera to quintessentially modern experiences of accelerated time.[44] Above all, it suggested a self-consciousness on the part of Roman audiences about *Otello*'s embeddedness in media strategies, and modern forms of mechanical reproduction: ones that challenged the idea of an original moment of performance. As a modern operatic commodity, *Otello*'s distinctive qualities were to be measured in locations in which its status as reproduction fully registered. If such sentiments were perceived in a modest way in Italian cities, they would become even more obvious when the opera crossed the Atlantic.

Waiting for *Otello*

By February 1887, opera lovers across the Atlantic had been the recipients of anxious reports for weeks in advance of *Otello*'s premiere. "In Milan, the heart and mind of Italian musical

[43] Federico Spolaor, "Il Treno *Otello*: Un viaggio dentro e fuori l'opera di Verdi. Dalla nascita del progetto cioccolatte, alla trasferta di Roma con "il treno *Otello*"" (Tesis di Laurea, Universita Ca'Foscari – Venezia, 2009/10); and Vella, "(De)railing Mobility".
[44] Ibid. As Vella observes, trains in general could be imagined as moving theatres, encouraging further associations between stagings and industrial production.

art, they were awaiting the first performance of *Otello* as a genuine event that will have an echo in the whole world", commented *La Gaceta Musical*, the weekly journal reporting on artistic events in Buenos Aires and abroad, immediately after the Milan premiere. "What will have happened? That is the question that we have heard in our artistic circles, whose people are eager to hear of *Otello*'s success […] we are hoping, then, soon to hear news of the work that has for so long had the expectations of the whole musical and artistic world at its feet." [45] Key to this anticipation was the sound of the telegram, whose crackling into life would offer a metonym of *Otello*'s global "echo". "It's for this reason, too, that we are waiting for the electric lead to speak. Several days have passed, however, and we haven't yet heard its word."[46] This sense of intense listening – the expectant wait for knowledge – draws together the anticipation of the La Scala audience with the Argentine longing for the telegram's message, in an experience of simultaneity. At the same time, it is hard to overlook the bathetic contrast between *Otello*'s heroic score (and Tamagno's mighty vocal presence) and the telegram's feeble crackle – a connection that suggests an obvious hierarchy, and risks positioning Buenos Aires itself as a mere "echo" of Milan. The anthropomorphic language of the telegram "speaking" nonetheless hints at an entwinement of the human and the mechanical in bringing opera across the Atlantic: of machines imagined as human (indeed machines bringing news of subjective reactions to opera), and mechanical reproduction mediated by the individual. As Marlis Schweitzer has observed, the telegram not only brought parts of the world into closer contact but also exerted a material impact on human behaviour, encouraging a new pace of human activity in tune with the machine – what she dubs "telegraphic performance". Imagining *Otello* via the telegram also seems to prepare listeners for an entanglement between the human and mechanical in live operatic performance – challenging distinctions between forms of reproduction.[47]

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[45] "En Milan, que es el corazon y la inteligencia del arte musicale italiano, se esperaba la primera representacion de *Otello* como una verdadera acontecimiento, que haría eco en todo el mundo […] Que habrá pasado? Esta es la pregunta que hemos oido en nuestros circulos artísticos, cuyas personas desean vivamente conocer el éxito del *Otello* […] Esperamos, pues, que bien pronto conocermos el suceso de la obra que, por tanto tiempo, ha mantenido de pié la espectativa del mundo musical y artistica de todos partes." "Y el *Otello*?", *La Gaceta Musical*, 6 February 1887, 1.

[46] "Es por esto tambien que se espera hable el hilo eléctrico. Sin embargo, han pasado ya muchas dias y su palabra no se ha oído aún." Ibid.

[47] On the telegram and "telegraphic performance", see Marlis Schweitzer, *Transatlantic Broadway: The Infrastructural Politics of Global Performance* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 69-102. On the telegram and new experiences of simultaneity, see Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Wenzlhuemer warns against simplistic comparisons between the telegraph and the internet, emphasising its fragmentary global coverage and expense, which tended to restrict private use.

Frustration at the absence of news was hardly unique to *La Gaceta Musical*. *Otello*'s premiere had become notorious for the levels of secrecy demanded by Verdi, and the New York press was equally impatient. "No musical work was ever composed which has caused so much trouble and worriment to the critics and lovers of melody in advance as Verdi's new opera, 'Otello'", complained *The New York Times* two weeks in advance of the opening night.[48] "Journalists and amateurs in Italy and France have been besieging singers and publishers for months to learn something of the nature of the new opera, but their efforts have been baffled in almost every direction, and 'Otello' is practically a sealed book to the general public, and is likely to remain so until Verdi and his librettist condescend to break the seal on the night of its performance." Gossip was not slow in filling the void, and speculation persisted even after the dress rehearsal, with rumours circulating that the opera would be a radical reinvention of Italian opera away from Wagner's influence.[49] Transatlantic news reports also opened up new collective readerships, and shaped expectations of *Otell*o's subsequent transfer: news sent from Milan by Italo Campanini (the Italian tenor-turned-impresario) was published in both *The New York Times* and *Il progresso Italo-Americano,* drawing English and Italian-language readers briefly into one imagined community. Campanini was by then New York operatic royalty: the Radamès in the New York premiere of *Aida* in 1873, he had also sung in *Faust* opposite Christine Nilsson on the Met's opening night, as well as the title role in the theatre's first *Lohengrin* in 1884.[50] Even more significantly for the New York *Otello,* Campanini had also been the first Italian Lohengrin, part of the abovementioned Bologna production that transferred to Florence in 1871, in Italy's first full-scale operatic tour. Early contact with *Otello* in New York was thus inseparable from Campanini himself: first in his role as journalist, the man behind the telegrams; and then via his efforts to transfer *Otello* across the Atlantic with the most "authentic" resources available to him.[51]

Otello's world premiere would have attracted press interest in both cities under any circumstances; but it also coincided with major urban and operatic developments that informed expectations of its local transfer in specific ways. After a brilliant opening season under the management of Henry Abbey, featuring an array of international stars in Italian,

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[48] "Verdi's new "Otello"; What is known of the coming event at La Scala", *The New York Times,* 21 January 1887. Efforts to secure press access had also been rebuffed: see "Verdi's New Opera", *Daily News,* 4 February 1887.
[49] "Signor Verdi's new opera; Italo Campanini at the dress rehearsal", *The New York Times,* 4 February 1887.
[50] See Gaspare Nella Vetro, *Italo Campanini: Il Primo Lohengrin* (Rome: Aracne, 2016).
[51] See "L'Otello di Verdi a Milano", *Il progresso italo-americano,* 5 February 1887, 1; and "Signor Verdi's new opera; Italo Campanini at the dress rehearsal", *The New York Times,* 4 February 1887.

German and French operas performed in Italian, the Met's heavy financial losses led to Abbey being replaced.[52] Control of programming was handed over to Leopold Damrosch, then head of the New York Symphonic Society, who offered a season performed entirely in German with German musical forces; Abbey's orchestra had been largely Italian. While a small number of Italian operas continued to be performed in translation, repertory choices at the Met swung strongly towards German in the next seven seasons, particularly Wagner, with the effect of casting Italian repertoire (however conveniently) as a bygone tradition.[53] Singers and productions promptly began to be transferred from Bayreuth (and elsewhere) to New York, and the first American Ring cycle was staged at the Met in the 1888-89 season; Abbey's opening season had used a mixture of imported and home-produced sets, with opulence a decisive factor.[54] Writers and audiences in New York were thus able to position themselves at the forefront of musical modernity rather than at the margins, moving away from a repertory model based on star singers, and with the large German émigré community providing a ready-made audience for German works.[55] Italian opera continued to be performed at the Academy of Music and elsewhere by visiting troupes, but the declining number of successful new compositions reinforced the sense among some critics by the mid-1880s that the genre was largely historic. Announcing the forthcoming productions of *Otello* in Latin America, *The Sun* declared:

> Brazil is indeed a favoured land, and the River Plate not less so, for in both those countries Verdi's "Otello" is to be heard this winter, though it has not as yet been performed anywhere in Europe out of Italy. Signor Ferrari, at once the Mapleson and the Gye, the Lago and the Harris, of South America, has, according to a Brazilian newspaper, made a satisfactory

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[52] Financial problems were compounded by a desire to compete with the Academy of Music: see Martin Mayer, *The Met: One Hundred Years of Grand Opera* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983), 33-48.

[53] Damrosch's musical director, recruited by the Met board, was Anton Seidl, a protegee of Wagner. On Wagner in New York, see Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Between 1886-90, at least half of the operas staged every season at the Met were by Wagner.

[54] Discussions over ownership of the staging materials under Abbey are recorded in the Metropolitan Opera Board Minutes, 1883-4, and 1892 [Metropolitan Opera Archives]. By the 1890s many of the materials were owned by the theatre itself: scenery and costumes were hired out with the theatre, but materials could also be imported for specific productions. Documentation surrounding staging materials for the "German seasons" is largely missing, however, and can only be gleaned from reviews.

[55] On the promotion of German musical culture within the USA in this period, see also Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850-1920* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009). A letter from Met board president James A. Roosevelt around the *Otello* premieres reflects the continued financial pressure keeping German repertory on the Met stage: "The Directors have not suggested giving Italian opera because they are convinced that to do so, in a satisfactory manner will require a much larger assessment upon the Stockholders, than to give German Opera". 21 January 1888, Metropolitan Opera Board Minutes.

> arrangement with Messrs. Ricordi, the eminent music publishers of Milan, and with Signor Verdi himself, by which he is to perform "Otello" whenever he pleases in Brazil or any of the South American republics […] Italian opera retired long since from Germany, where throughout the eighteenth century it flourished greatly […] It seems to have died out in France, and it cannot be said to live with any full life in England. But it is as popular as ever with the public of Madrid and of Lisbon, and if it has lost ground in Europe generally, enterprising managers, acting unconsciously on Canning's dictum, are appealing to the New World in order to redress the balance of the old.[56]

If Italian opera could be declared virtually extinct, there were plenty of New York voices sceptical about this development, however. Henry Abbey's one week residency of Italian opera at the Met in spring 1887 took $70,000 at the box office compared with $137,000 for the entire German season of 61 performances that year.[57] "[To] Americans, why should the patriotism of Germany have more charm than the patriotism of Italy?" asked *The Theatre* two months after *Otello*'s La Scala premiere.[58] Frustration on the part of box office holders also led to the German seasons becoming increasingly unprofitable by the late 1880s, and by 1891 Italian repertory had returned to the theatre under Abbey. Claims about the new-found superiority of New York's Germanic musical culture were unsurprisingly also shadowed by insecurities, ones that became explicit when Campanini's forthcoming season at the Academy of Music was announced in October 1887. "Every musical season within the memory of the oldest inhabitant is going to be the greatest on record", commented *The Theatre*. "[The] history of Italian opera in New York is such a record of wreck and disaster that Campanini's best friends only hide their misgivings from respect for the tenor's sensitive and sanguine nature. If, however, Campanini should succeed where so many have failed, he will do much to verify the boast of his countrymen that Italy's is the language of music and that Italian music is imperishable."[59] When *Otello*'s inclusion in the season was confirmed, press attention was lavished on the precise reproduction of the La Scala staging, which promised to offer an Italian equivalent to the Met's Wagnerian theatrical spectacles:

> Signor Italo Campanini, through his general manager, F. A. Schwab, has at length completed arrangements for his promised spring season of Italian opera in this city. It will be given at the

[56] "Verdi's Latest Opera Secured for Brazil (from the London Daily News)", *The Sun*, 8 November 1887, 4.
[57] See Mayer, *The Met*, 63.
[58] David Gamut, "Critics-Librettos", *The Theatre*, 25 April 1887.
[59] "Musical Prospects", *The Theatre*, 31 October 1887

> Academy of Music, commencing on Easter Monday, April 2, and will cover a period of four weeks, during which half a dozen grand operas are to be brought forth in the most complete manner. Signor Campanini, however, will not depend for success upon the ancient and honorable repertoire. Having acquired the sole right to produce on this side of the Atlantic Giuseppe Verdi's newest opera "Otello", he will make known that work to New York music lovers during the second week of his season […] Sig. Marconi, one of the triad of great tenors now delighting Europe and reducing the South American republics to mendicancy – Sig. Masini having received $3000 a night last season in Buenos Ayres, and Sig. Tamagno being guaranteed $3250 for his nightly labors by the same thriving community next spring – is to sing Otello […] "Otello" will be placed upon the stage with scenery and dresses made in Milan by the same makers that equipped La Scala with its costumes and sets, and Signor Campanini pledges himself that the American representations shall be in every respect equal to the memorable presentation of the work in the musical centre of Italy.[60]

Business interests were obvious in these claims; and Campanini's earlier reports from La Scala could also lead to awkward historical rewriting: initial praise for Pantaleoni was replaced by harsh criticism. But the account did also give credibility to his boast that the production (even without Tamagno or Maurel) would be an unprecedently lavish and accurate recreation of the La Scala experience, outdoing any previous Italian operatic transfer to the USA. By the time of Campanini's arrival in April 1888 this even extended to advertising the use of the staging manual:

> Signor Campanini said […] "The opera will have a better cast here than at its first production, as Signora Pantaleoni, who then sang 'Desdemona', is an excellent artist but has not much voice […] The scenery, dresses and properties will be an exact reproduction of the originals. Everything has been imported […] The instructions for the business of the play are here, printed in this large book. There is not a move made by any of the characters that is not plainly marked, and also the exact time at which it is to be made […] No Italian opera has ever been presented here in as complete and costly a way as I shall present this one."[61]

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[60] "Italian Opera in April", *The Sun*, 22 January 1888, 7.

[61] "Italian Opera Singers Arriving", *New York Tribune*, 2 April 1888, 5. Correspondence between Ricordi and Campanini in advance of the tour reveals the publisher's concerns about maintaining strict control of the rights: "Vi preghiamo [...] di fare riposo in lugo sicuro e controllare dopo ogni prova e dopo ogni rappresentazione tanto la partitura che le parti d'orchestra" ["We beg you […] to place these in a safe place and to take care of both the score and the orchestral parts after every rehearsal and every performance."] Ricordi copialettere, 1887-1888, 6, 126-7 (letter dated 22 March 1888). Archivio Storico Ricordi.

Campanini's press interview promised a new level of sophistication from previous operatic transfers: one that reflected both new practices within Italy, and new economic possibilities in the USA. As scholars such as Alan Trachtenberg have outlined, the 1880s had marked a key turning point in New York's economic history, with the rapid economic growth of Manhattan driving the "consolidation" of the New York economic elite as the most powerful group in the United States, in Sven Beckert's more recent assessment.[62] As William R. Taylor has elsewhere argued, the postbellum economic boom heralded the explosion of Manhattan's commercial culture, as no other city in the United States was as free from the "spatial priorities and civil-regulatory requirements of a national or state government [...] business and commerce, one might say, had the run of the city".[63] New York's cultural production was characterised by close interaction between producer and consumer – such as vaudeville or street theatre – which reflected the urban density of the city by the 1880s, as well as its extreme rate of urban expansion and change. This model, Taylor suggests, was overshadowed by mass culture by the 1920s, in which "there is little reciprocity beyond the marketplace between producer and consumer, as, for example, in wire-service news dispatches" – a shift that reflected a production model shift from a local to a national market.[64] In operatic terms, however, the diversity of cultural models already on offer by 1888 is crucial, as Campanini's staging manual (and its fantasy of mass reproduction) rubbed up against older models of operatic entertainment. The notion of an operatic "news-dispatch" from Milan – literal or metaphorical – could be treated with scepticism but also excitement; mechanical reproduction was both new and as yet unalienating, precisely because it was surrounded by a different cultural model. However hotly anticipated the arrival of *Otello* from Milan was, moreover, it was an event mediated by a familiar singer and impresario, one who had attended *Otello*'s premiere and relocated his own career from Milan to New York: the redressing of the Old through the New embodied in one man.

In Buenos Aires by 1887, large-scale operatic transfers from Italy were hardly new, and Italian opera's fortunes were faring significantly better: Angelo Ferrari had managed the

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[62] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Society and Culture in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982); and Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-96* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). On the city's urban growth throughout the nineteenth century, see Edwin G. Burrows & Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 650-1236.

[63] William R Taylor, *In Pursuit of Gotham: Culture and Commerce in New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xvii.

[64] Ibid, xxiii. See also the chapter "Launching a Commercial Culture: Newspaper, Magazine and Popular Novel as Urban Baedekers", 69-91.

Colón since the late 1860s and seasons had relied on the movement of performers and sets from Italy – especially Milan – alongside the less ambitious offerings at the Teatro Nacional and Politeama. But *Otello* was undoubtedly the most significant Italian premiere to reach the city since *Aida* and demanded an extraordinary civic occasion; one that would also measure up to the Milanese original. *Otello*'s premiere also coincided with plans to demolish the existing Colón theatre, making way for a much larger theatre adequate to the city's rapidly growing population, and prominence within the international opera circuit: the 1857 structure was scheduled for demolition at the end of the 1888 season, and *Otello* would be one of its final productions.[65] Issues of the theatre's cultural status were therefore heavily present in public discourse. The new Colón was a key part of Torcuato de Alvear's wider programme of urbanisation, and as James Scobie notes, the 1880s were the most rapid period of growth for the city during its history, when the city centre was re-modelled as a blatant Parisian-style showcase advertising the country's economic progress (see Fig. 1.3).[66] This urban renovation was largely limited to grand public areas and the suburbs of the elite, yet the scale and rate of change nevertheless provoked astonishment from locals and visitors alike for what was being swept away, in ways that clearly echoed earlier transformations in Paris.[67] As the 1887 census proudly recorded, "the forward strides of the city of Argentina […] have become the object of admiration for people in modern times" and had also given rise to seasons at its elite theatres offering "the celebrities of the artistic world".[68] Nostalgic rejections of such transformations were easily dismissed as barbarism by civic officials; and yet what is crucial is that these urban changes were by 1887 themselves highly familiar, even canonical: a form of modernisation unmistakeably shaped by descriptions and reproductions of Paris and elsewhere.

In that sense, urbanisation in Buenos Aires throughout the 1880s recapitulated much larger questions about Argentina's neo-colonial identity, while inflecting them through an

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[65] On the construction of the Colón, see John E. Hodge, "The Construction of the Teatro Colón", *The Americas* 36/2 (1979), 235-255; and Claudio E. Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 17-38.

[66] James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), especially 109.

[67] See in particular Jeffrey D. Needall, "Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires: Public Space and Public Consciousness in Fin-de-Siècle Latin America", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37/3 (1995), 519-40. On Paris, see for example Michel Carmona, *Haussmann: His Life and Times, and the Making of Modern Paris*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 2002).

[68] "los asombrosos adelantos de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, que ha llegado á ser la admiracion de las gentes en los tiempos modernos […] la celebridades del mundo artístico"; *Censo General de Poblacion, Edificacion, Comercio é Industrias de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1887* (Buenos Aires: Compañia Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1889), 51-3.

established visual language of modernity: the New World as the echo of the Old.[69] A study of the city written by Emile Daireaux in 1888 – in French for Parisian audiences, before being translated into Spanish at the Argentine government's request – circled repeatedly around these uncanny aspects of the city, as well as its remarkable rate of development: its peculiar repetition of European practices.[70] Observations about Buenos Aires's economic and demographic growth in the preceding decades also recurred in the local press around the *Otello* premiere, both in the form of free-standing articles and as specific contexualisations of the city's rich operatic seasons:

> Amongst all the cities of the South-American continent, Buenos Aires is without doubt the one that is most quickly expanding, extending, and broadening itself, and growing in industrial, commercial, manufacturing and artistic importance. In Europe, in spite of the grand constructions, in spite of the new and spacious streets that are opening in the midst of the old ones, in spite of the transformations achieved with relative haste in Paris, Marseille, Barcelona, Milan and in other cities, there are no examples of such a great and swift development. You have to go to the United States, you have to stay in New York or in Chicago, you have to look for the marvellous and somewhat miraculous advances of the Yankees to come up with something similar or better. If you were to set up a paradigm between the things of the Old and the New World, you would say that the cultured cities of Europe go forward in their development and progress like old men, or at least mature ones; they proceed in their business, that's to say slowly, studying the past a lot, doubting their power to complete the work that was happily started; while the cultured cities of America carry on like young men full of life and vigour, without once looking at the past nor concerning themselves with the future […] Buenos Aires has tripled its population in twenty years.[71]

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[69] On the neo-colonial dimension to Argentina's economy in this period, see David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonisation to the Falklands War and Alfonsín* (London: Tauris and Co, 1987); and Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[70] Emile Daireaux, *Vida y Costumbres en la Plata* (Buenos Aires, 1888).

[71] "Entre todas las ciudades del continente sud-americano, Buenos Aires es sin duda la que mas rapidamente se puebla, se extiende, se ensancha, y crece en importancia industrial, commercial, fabril y artística. En Europa, apesar de las grandes construcciones, apesar de las nuevas y espaciosas calles que van abriéndose en medio de las antiguas, apesar de las transformaciones realizades con relativo actividad en Paris, en Marseille, en Barcelona, en Milan y en otras ciudades, no se encuentran ejemplos de un désarollo tan grande y tan rápido. Hay que ir a los Estados Unidos, es preciso deternerse en Nueva York o en Chicago, hay que buscar los maravillosos y casi milagrosos progresos de los *yanquees* para dar con algo parecido o mayor. Si hubiera de establecer un parangon entre las cosas del Antiguo y del Nuevo Mundo, diría que los pueblos cultos de Europa proceden en su desarollo y progresos como los hombres ancianos, o cuando menos maduros, proceden en sus negocios, es decir, lentamente, estudiando mucho el pasado, recelando no basten las fuerzas para concluir los trabajos felizmente empezados; mientras los pueblos cultos de América proceden como los jovenes llenos de vida y de vigor, sin

The rhetorical emphasis on Buenos Aires's (and more generally America's) growth was thus explicitly contrasted with the slower pace in Europe: a vision of the world in which the "Old World" was too saddled by the weight of history to achieve its aims, while the "New World" energetically proceeded.[72] As other articles made clear, the United States frequently functioned as a model in this respect for Latin America: the 4th of July, *Sud América* newspaper remarked in 1888, was a great day for Argentines because "it is the anniversary of independence of a place which we take for a model, following the words of one of its great men"; while President Sarmiento had himself declared that "we shall be the United States".[73] Yet this American advance over Europe was crucially a difference in speed and focus rather than aim. New York and Buenos Aires were alike in the swiftness with which they were growing and embracing new urban developments, but their long-range goals were fundamentally similar to those of Europe. And despite claims not to be concerned with the future, the rhetoric in this article rests precisely upon this historical consciousness – one that defines the New World as the repetition and acceleration of the Old. As the 1887 Buenos Aires census could not resist asking as it concluded its overview of the city's history: "What will become of this great city of Buenos Aires within fifty years, that's to say, an epoch not so far distant that many of those alive now will not reach it?"[74]

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mirar nunca al pasado, ni preocuparse del porvenir […] Buenos Aires ha triplicado en veinte años su poblacion." "Buenos Aires: Tipos, panaramas, costumbres", *Sud América*, 19 June 1888, 1.

[72] For a discussion of the longer history of this debate, see Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900*, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010; first edition 1973).

[73] "es el anniversario de la independencia de un pueblo que tomamos por modelo y segun las palabras mismas de uno de sus grandes hombres seguimos". "4 de Julio", *Sud América*, 4 July 1888. Sarmiento is cited in Deborah L. Norden & Roberto Russell, *The United States and Argentina: Changing Relationships in a Changing World* (London: Routledge, 2002), 14.

[74] "¿Qué será de esta gran ciudad de Buenos Aires dentro de cincuenta años, es decir, en época no tan remota que no la puedan alcanzar muchos de los presentes?"; *Censo General*, 56.

Fig. 1.3. Buenos Aires panorama (late nineteenth century); Fototeca, Archivo General de la Nación.

The rebuilding of the Colón indicated the city's startling demographic and economic growth, but it also sought to cement the shifting aesthetic standards that accompanied this. As historian Ernesto Quesada complained in 1893, the older theatre's poor acoustics had long encouraged generations of singers – even Tamagno, a regular visitor – to strain their voices, and had perpetuated older, more barbarous traditions that the city wished to move away from.[75] Redesigning the theatre was an opportunity to replicate foreign traditions more accurately, with even acoustic spaces being imagined as open to reproduction.[76] In this context, Buenos Aires was quick to declare itself exceptional both within Argentina and within its own continent, with complaints voiced throughout the 1880s that excessive ticket prices at the Colón were a ruse to subsidise the impresario's theatres

[75] Ernesto Quesada, *Reseñas y Criticas* (Buenos Aires: 1893), especially 593-644. On Quesada's sociology, see Oscar Terán, *Vida Intelectual en el Buenos Aires fin-de-siglo (1880-1910): Derivas de la "cultura científica"* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica de Argentina, 2000), 207-87.

[76] Discussions of the new theatre are contained in the Torcuato de Alvear papers, Archivo Histórico Municipal de la Ciudad, alongside other building works in the city. Surviving correspondence with theatres in Paris and New York indicates concerns to match current international visual and safety standards, as well as for operatic activity to transfer smoothly to the Teatro de la Ópera during the construction work. For a related discussion of reproducible acoustics, see Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

elsewhere in Latin America.[77] In certain respects, however, Argentina's operatic seasons had long been characterised by older repertoire than in Italy: Wagner had arrived only in 1883, and as John Rosselli notes, "as late as 1883 a low-level Italian company could bring to Montevideo a repertoire of six operas all composed between 1792 and 1840, something that no theatre in Italy at that date would have countenanced"; the regular opera movement between Montevideo and Buenos Aires in this period indicates this could easily be extended to Argentina, as in the 1820s and 1830s.[78] While new Italian operas were also quick to arrive in the city, the endurance to an earlier body of repertory attests both to practical constraints (such as rehearsal time) and the longstanding reliance upon operatic troupes that had failed to keep up with Italian fashion. If an operatic canon was firmly embedded in Milan's operatic culture by the 1880s – one that *Otello* would inevitably enter – Italian opera by 1887 occupied a paradoxical position in Buenos Aires, as indeed in New York: a cornerstone of the operatic repertoire, yet a genre that increasingly seemed creatively extinct.

In the intervening months between *Otello*'s world premiere and the opera's first American performances, publications about the opera therefore repeatedly outlined a conflicted relationship towards Milan and Europe more generally, suggesting equally an aspiration to replicate European cultural standards and an awareness of their growing status within the global operatic circuit. This simultaneous sense of being at once behind European trends, yet moving ahead in economic and urban development, gave them a unique position to observe the dynamics shaping the operatic industry in Italy, and new forms of mass cultural production. The premiere of *Otello* was especially potent: the latest – and presumably final – work by a great Italian master, yet one with no obvious successors, that invited a newly ambitious form of operatic transfer. The premiere of *Otello* thus provoked a flurry of activity to bring it quickly across the Atlantic. "At last the electric wire has spoken, telling us of the immense success obtained at the Royal La Scala theatre in Milan by the new opera *Otello* from the distinguished maestro José Verdi", reported *La Gaceta Musical*. "The triumph of Verdi's opera has great importance for art, which in Verdi has one of the few representatives of the original Italian school. An old God still exists, not everybody has to

[77] See Kristen McCleary, "Culture and Commerce: An Urban History of Theater in Buenos Aires, 1880-1920" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002), 385-410, on such complaints. On Buenos Aires's understanding of itself in relation to the interior and the rest of South America, see Horacio Vazquez-Rial, *Buenos Aires 1880-1930: La capital de un imperio imaginario* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996), especially 21-89.

[78] John Rosselli, "The Opera Business and the Italian Immigrant Community in Latin America 1820-1930: The Example of Buenos Aires", *Past and Present* 127/1 (1990), 155-182; here especially 168. As Rosselli notes, many Italian comic opera performers had first arrived in Latin America during the 1820s in response to changing repertory tastes within Italy.

disappear under the inexorable law of transformation in art […] Will this be the last production from the tireless inspiration of the author of *Rigoletto*?"[79] New York critics noted that "such a scene has rarely been witnessed by anybody as that presented at La Scala on Saturday night", and that Tamagno had used "his powerful voice with much effect".[80] In Buenos Aires, a number of different arrangements were soon heard of extracts from *Otello*, provoking a mixture of outrage and enthusiasm.[81] For *La Gaceta Musical*, adaptations of the piano-vocal score were "unforgivable, even in this classic land of wool and hides" and decried as "anti-artistic".[82] More controversially still, in April 1887 the same journal reported that *Otello* had now been presented in an arrangement for brass band, a situation that caused one commentator – the aptly-named Yago – to ask "what seriousness shall [*Otello*] have in America?"[83]

In Buenos Aires this push to stage *Otello* as quickly as possible – as well as anxieties about its appropriate form – came to the fore in the race between the Colón and the Politeama to offer the first production: one that reinforced Buenos Aires's position as the "silver city", in which impresarios could extract maximise profit from their operatic goods. In New York, by contrast, *Otello*'s multiple iterations were spaced out over several years, enabling the work to serve as a test case for shifting attitudes towards Italian opera more generally. For both Buenos Aires and New York, however, the premiere of *Otello* could potentially serve as a passing of the operatic flame: a moment when the latest entrant into the Italian operatic canon met the newest claims to operatic centrality; and when an opera already canonised met two cities eager to stake their clam to the operatic future, while remaining intensely aware of their imbrication within the European past.

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[79] "Por fin ha hablado el hilo telegráfico, comunicandonos el inmenso éxito obtenido en el Real Teatro del la Scala de Milan de la nueva opera *Otello* del insigne maestro Jose Verdi […] El triunfo de la opera de Verdi tiene un alto significado para el arte, que conserva en Verdi uno de los pocos representantes de la escuela original italiana. Aun existe un viejo dios, que no todos han de desaparecer bajo la ley inexorable de los transformismos en el arte […] ¿Será esta la ultima produccion de la incansable inspiracion del autor del *Rigoletto*?" "El Otello", *La Gaceta Musical*, 13 February 1887.

[80] "Verdi's New Opera", 7 February 1887, publication unknown (NYPL Verdi, *Otello* clippings file).

[81] Operatic band arrangements are discussed in Anibal E. Cetrangolo, "Opera e identidad en el encuentro migratorio: El melodrama italiano en Argentina entre 1880 y 1920" (PhD dissertation, University of Valladolid, 2010), 77-148.

[82] "eso no es posible perdonar, ni aún en esta clásica tierra de las lanas y de los cueros. Nosotros, francamente, no le escusamos, porque consideramos anti-artistico su proceder"; *La Gaceta Musical*, 27 March 1887, 1.

[83] "Que seriedad se ha de tener en América?"; "El Otello en band", *La Gaceta Musical*, 3 April 1887, 2.

Verdian Breakdown

By the time *Otello* finally arrived on the Eastern Seaboard, audiences had been prepared by months of speculation about the opera's stylistic profile, technical challenges and future historical legacy. The eventual arrival of the work in New York in April 1888 also came with pride at the rapidity with which the opera had crossed the Atlantic. In line with Campanini's focus upon the precise recreation of the La Scala production, the staging used sets made for the 1887 Parma transfer, designed by Verdi's colleague Magnani and with costumes made by Brunetti, Chiappi & C. from Milan.[84] Alas, though, such a swift transfer was not simply a source of pleasure: it also revealed a breakdown in the mechanisms of transatlantic operatic movement, as Campanini's ambitions for a precise recreation of the La Scala staging crashed against human and mechanical obstacles. "Signor Campanini's enterprise […] has favoured New York with an earlier opportunity than any of the European capitals outside Italy, save Vienna, have had to become acquainted with the latest, and doubtless the last, operatic creation of Verdi", declared the *New York Tribune*.

> Much has been written about 'Otello', and it has been made plain that the defenders of the Italian opera look upon it as a formidable bulwark against the aggressions of the modern German movement. The haste with which it has been put upon the American stage, the lateness of the arrival of its scenic outfit and some of the singers who presented it, made adequate rehearsal impossible, and it is therefore equally impossible for a reviewer to express an opinion which shall be fair toward the composition, the public, the performers, the art and himself so soon after the fall of the curtain on the first representation.

The *New York Herald* was more compassionate, and noted the effort that had gone into this unprecedently ambitious transatlantic operatic transfer:

> The famous opera, 'Othello', that made so brilliant a success in Europe, was produced last night at the Academy of Music, under the management of our dear old friend, Italo Campanini […] We have heard how much has been done to render the production as great as that given in 'La Scala'. We have told in these columns how the scenery, the dresses, the properties have been made a faithful reproduction of the originals; it has also been stated how the score was obtained from Ricordi, of Milan, how many rehearsals there have been to ensure the success of the first production.[85]

[84] See Vetro, *Italo Campanini*, 185.
[85] "Verdi's "Otello": First Production of the Italian Master's Latest Opera", *New York Herald*, 17 April 1888, 10

Elsewhere, however, other publications were quick to blame Campanini for underestimating the theatrical sophistication of operagoers in New York, and mocked the distance between Campanini's ambitions and reality.[86] While the movement of *Otello* from Milan to Rome had demonstrated Italy's modernity, transatlantic transfer instead seemed to expose the limits of its technological expertise, and recalled earlier, more amateurish efforts at bringing opera across the Atlantic. "Since the days of the Strakosches and Col. Insolvent Mapleson the times have changed here, and with the times the opinions and ideas of the musical public have undergone transmutations […] The standard of excellence has been advanced […] Mr Campanini's funeral has few mourners to follow it."[87]

In spite of the poverty of the musical performance (in particular Marconi's Otello), disappointment was offset for some critics by the excitement of hearing the work. Even under such frustrating circumstances, in fact, listening to *Otello* was inseparable from broader questions about the health of Italian opera and *Otello*'s own afterlife – ones particularly pressing in light of the German dominance at the Met.[88] "[Had] the announcement been made at the close of the representation that Signor Campanini would himself assume the part during the remainder of the season", continued the *New York Tribune*, "we have no doubt that it would have been hailed with delight by all anxious that so serious an effort by so serious a composer should be tried on its merits by the American public."[89] For *The Sun*, meanwhile, the second performance confirmed that "'Otello' wears well"; but for others it was clear that *Otello* was "dramatically insignificant compared with the definite demands and tendencies of our epoch […] its fate in future art, we believe, is to be respected as an intellectual development of a single Italian mind; not a precedent for Italian operatic composers to defer to, or the world of operatic critics to cordially regard."[90] Overall, though, the misplaced ambition of Campanini's troupe in seeking to reproduce this complex theatrical work

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[86] "No Fault of Italian Opera", *Musical Courier*, 16 May 1888.
[87] Ibid. Adelina Patti's first adult tour in America had already been the locus of such complaints: see Hilary Poriss, "She Came, She Sang…She Conquered? Adelina Patti in New York", in *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840-1900*, ed. John Graziano (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 218-34. On Mapleson's company, see John Frederick Cone, *First Rival of the Metropolitan Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) and *The Mapleson Memoirs: The Career of an Operatic Impresario, 1858–1888*, ed. Harold Rosenthal (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966).
[88] As one journalist summarised, "With singular unanimity amateurs of all shades of opinion had looked upon "Otello" as the last refuge of Italian opera, and quite as much curiosity touching it was felt among the Wagnerites as among the Italianissimi [...] The interest of adherents of the Italian school was, of course, quickened by the hope that the master who had dominated the Italian stage for a generation would bring back to the old faith those who had begun to worship the strange gods at the Metropolitan Opera House." *The Critic: a Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts*, 28 April 1888.
[89] "Music – the Drama: Verdi's *Otello*", *New York Tribune*, 17 April 1888, 4.
[90] Ibid.

coloured most impressions. "If there is to be any resuscitation of Italian opera in this country", the *Musical Courier* concluded, "it must be under the auspices of men of greater intelligence and broader views than the managers of Campanini's Italian Opera Company displayed in their production of Verdi's Otello […] Who then is to be blamed for the failure of Italian opera here than the Italians themselves?"[91]

After the first performances, Marconi withdrew from the tour and Campanini took over in a valiant bid for recovery, but critical reactions were even more negative.[92] The tour was a financial disaster, with losses totalling $45,000 before Campanini's return to Genoa.[93] Even if English-language critics generally condemned the sloppy standard of presentation, however, more positive opinions were voiced in the Italian-language press, who praised the transfer for its Italian authenticity and demonstration of national strength – even military force – as well as lauding Verdi's ability to change with the times while remaining indelibly Verdi. *Il progresso italo-americano* concluded that the New York premiere was [in] sum, a battle and a victory won […] the staging was splendid […] of the first class and you would not find better on the stage of Milan, Rome or Bologna."[94] Discussions of the *Otello* production ran in the newspaper alongside its plans to support a statue to Garibaldi in New York – a project funded by Carlo Barsotti (the paper's editor) and which would be inaugurated in June 1888. In this context, both the Campanini staging and even *Otello* itself could potentially be imagined as diasporic monuments in the city, ones that celebrated Italian culture as well as its capacity to move forward in the New World. When the Verdi statue was finally erected in New York in 1906 (again funded by Barsotti), *Otello* would be one of the four operas featured at its base, all of which dated from the final phase of Verdi's career in the heyday of Italian emigration and North American expansion (see Fig. 1.4).[95]

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[91] *Musical Courier*, 18 April 1888, 276.
[92] "vocally he is nothing more nor less than a wreck, and not even a pleasing wreck"; *Musical Courier*, 25 April 1888, 292.
[93] *New York Spirit of the Times*, 23 June 1888. Correspondence between Campanini and Ricordi confirms the financial failure of the transfer, with the publisher commiserating Campanini on the unhappy experiment: see Ricordi copialettere, 1888-1889, 6, 449 (letter dated 8 September 1888). Archivio Storico Ricordi.
[94] "Fu, insomma, una Battaglia e una vittoria conquistata […] Splendida la messa in scena […] di primo ordine e quale non divirebbe sul palco scencio di Milano, di Roma, di Bologna". "L'*Otello* all'Academia di Musica", *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, 17 April 1888; and "L'Otello", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 18 April 1888, 1.
[95] On the Garibaldi statue, see for example "Per Garibaldi", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 2 June 1888. On the Verdi statue and Barsotti's efforts to promote a positive image of Italian culture, see Stefano Luconi, "Opera as a Nationalistic Weapon: The Erection of the Monument to Giuseppe Verdi in New York City", *Italian Americana* 34/1 (2016), 37-64.

Fig. 1.4. Verdi Statue, New York, with Otello figure; Otello appears modelled on Tamagno. Robert L. Bracklow photograph collection, 1882-1918, New York Historical Society

Verdian Objects

The Buenos Aires premiere two months later provoked similar concerns about making critical judgements on the long-awaited opera, even if theatrical standards were significantly higher. The arrival of *Otello* at the Politeama theatre was a triumph for the impresario Cesare Ciacchi, who had also lured Adelina Patti to come for a notoriously well-paid tour: a double achievement that led him to be dubbed "the foremost impresario of the Río de la Plata".[96] Questions about the authenticity of Ciacchi's score (and how exactly it had been obtained) were widespread, however. Angelo Ferrari had secured the rights for the first Argentine performances (at the Colón), but tenor Roberto Stagno and soprano Romilda Pantaleoni had also signed contracts with Ciacchi for performances at the Politeama a month earlier; Ricordi finally wrote to the Italian minister in Buenos Aires pleading for him to intervene, arguing

[96] "primer empresario del Rio de la Plata"; *El Censor*, 10 June 1888. Cesare Ciacchi also brought *Otello* and Patti to Montevideo the following month, where the singer likewise performed in operas including *I puritani*, *Lakmé* and *Semiramide*. See Susana Salgado, *The Teatro Solís: 150 years of Opera, Concert and Ballet in Montevideo* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 63-9.

that falsified music would please nobody.[97] In the end the Politeama performances went ahead as planned, and a legal case was dissolved after Verdi urged Pantaleoni to proceed with the production rather than go to court. This legal dispute was inseparable from broader questions about the extent of Italian copyright laws in Argentina, and provoked questions about the ethical obligations associated with operatic performance: was it right to contravene a composer's intentions so flagrantly, merely to satisfy local curiosity about Verdi? Where did a composer's authority end?[98] For some reporters, the "double *Otello*" would only bring shame to Buenos Aires, with *Sud América* comparing the two productions with the proud presentation of two children to a returning father who had only left one on his departure.[99] A parody in *El Mosquito* magazine framed the dispute in terms of *Otello*'s own plot, with impresarios murdering one another for their unfaithfulness to Verdi's demands (see Fig. 1.5).[100] The *Otello* race in Buenos Aires in that sense differed from earlier operatic races not just in its mechanics – issues of transatlantic copyright – but also in the framework within which it was received: an awareness of accelerating interconnectivity within Italian operatic culture, coupled with Buenos Aires's growth.[101] Despite the questionable legal status of the performance, the announcement of the first performance of *Otello* in South America – during a performance of *Semiramide* with Patti – had caused a storm at the box office, and both the dress rehearsal and performances were widely covered. Yet even with a second production soon to follow at the Colón, some critics could not resist preserving the initial encounter in the tones of a diary:

> The pen jumps in the nervous hand, it stumbles on the paper, it seems to want to tear through it. I left the theatre an hour ago, and the emotional upheaval is still shaking me. I'm enjoying this pleasure that hurts, that destroys: that of feelings brought to their highest intensity. And no wonder! I've attended a grandiose spectacle: the meeting of two geniuses across three centuries, stretching out their hands, completing themselves, presenting a magnificent creation to the admiration of men […] Neither a critic nor a historian. There, when I listen to Verdi's *Otello*, as when I listen to *Traviata* today, I will have to be calm to judge, according to my modest criteria; obeying that intimate councillor that each one of us carries within their

[97] Ricordi copialettere, 1887-1888, 2, 87; a letter from Ricordi addressed to Conte Fossati Ministro Italia Buenos Aires. "Informato Impresa Ciachi offra *Otello* Verdi pervengo trasmitti miei diritti America Sud unicamente Impresa Ferrari. Altri avrebbero musica rubata falsata." Archivio Storico Ricordi.
[98] "Derechos Artisticos: La Cuestion de *Otello*", *Sud América*, 1 June 1888, 1.
[99] "Derechos Artisticos", *Sud América*, 11 June 1888, 1.
[100] *El Mosquito*, July 1888.
[101] For a recent discussion of an operatic race in the earlier nineteenth century, see Charlotte Bentley, "The Race for Robert and Other Rivalries: Negotiating the Local and (Inter)National in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 29/1 (2017), 94-112.

> own conscience […] And here I stop. The hand is tired, the head is dizzy from the flutterings of genius…but, there are still powers left to print with firm characters: VIVA VERDI![102]

Writing about *Otello* even at this moment is suffused with anticipations of future encounters with the work – a time when it will be as canonical as *Traviata,* and its disruption of historical time furthered by temporal distance. As in Milan, the union of Shakespeare and Verdi promises to generate a masterpiece.[103] Reviewing the dress rehearsal, *El Censor* more pragmatically noted that all of the costumes and sets had been brought from Milan especially, and that the premiere would be a tremendous success, worthy of Verdi and the artists who had the honour of premiering *Otello* in Buenos Aires: a privilege returned by the presence of local dignitaries and intellectuals.[104] The involvement of Pantaleoni added further authority to the Politeama performances, and the decisive proof of the score's authenticity; amid transatlantic transfer, the human factor was still crucial.[105] The Italian language press, meanwhile, unsurprisingly treated the event as one of major diasporic significance. *Otello*'s premiere was not just an opportunity to uphold Italian culture in the New World, but also an occasion in which the Milanese media storm could be replicated in Buenos Aires. "[The] enthusiasm and love which last year invaded the hearts of all admirers of the great master in his beloved homeland, are reproduced today on this side of the ocean", remarked *L'operaio italiano;* while repeated cries of "Viva Verdi!" – as also declared by *El Nacional*'s correspondent – promised the opera's endurance in Argentina.[106] An image of Verdi as a

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[102] "La pluma salta en la mano nerviosa, tropieza en el papel, parece que quisiera romperlo. Dejé el teatro hace una hora, y la repurcusion de las emociones me sacude todavia. Gozo de ese placer que duele, que destroza: el de los sentimientos llevados a su mas alta intensidad. Y no es para menos! He asistado a un espectaculo grandioso: el concorcio de dos genios al traves de tres siglos; Shakespeare y Verdi, dándose la mano, complatandose, para presenter a la admiracion de los hombres una creacion portentosa […] Ni critica, ni cronica. Allà, cuando oiga el Otello de Verdi, como hoy escucho Traviata, tendré calme para juzgar, segun mi modesto criterio, obedeciendo a ese consejero intimo que cada uno lleva dentro de su propria conciencia […] Y aqui punto. La mano está fatigada, la cabeza maraeda por los aletazos del genio…pero, aún hay fuerzas estampar con firmes caráctere: VIVA VERDI!" "Otello", *El Nacional*, 13 June 1888, 1

[103] Both Ernesto Rossi and Tomasso Salvini had performed in Buenos Aires in the 1870s, including performances of *Otello* at the Colón in 1871, and prominent members of the *generacion de ochenta* (such as Miguel Cané) had published essays on and translations of Shakespeare's work by 1888. See Pedro Luis Barcia, "Shakespeare en la Argentina (Siglo XIX)" in *Shakespeare en la Argentina* (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de la Plata, 1965), 68-97. See also Mariano Bosch, *Historia del teatro en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires, 1905). At times, claims of Shakespeare's familiarity seem overinflated: *El Nacional* asserted that *Otello* the play was known even to commoners in the city. See *El Nacional*, 13 June 1888.

[104] *El Censor*, 11 June 1888.

[105] *El Censor*, 10 June 1888. The Italian-language press also defended Pantaleoni's involvement: see "Pro Desdemona"*, L'operaio italiano*, 12 June 1888.

[106] "Viva Verdi! Egli é sopravvissuto a Victor Hugo, non soltanto, fortunatamente, nella esistenza fisica, ma in quella intellettuale, il poeta francesce si concentra nell'opera sua, nel suo ingegno, nella sua gloria; l'artista italiano è vento, nella maturitá degli anni, come ringiovanendo sé stesso, ed al *Rigoletto* è giunto al *Don Carlos*, dal *Don Carlos* all'*Aida*, altrettante progressioni artistiche, altrettanti svolgimenti d'un intelletto sempre

Mazzinian national hero had already started to emerge in Buenos Aires's Italian community by the 1880s, as Anibal Cetrangolo has argued, with Verdi imagined as a democratic, republican figure who represented the "Italian worker". The theatre in the La Boca district, for example, would be named the Teatro Verdi in 1901; and the *Otello* band arrangements were no doubt performed by some Italian unions.[107] But these patriotic ideas clearly also operated in close dialogue with Milanese representations, mediated through detailed newspaper and telegram reports which offered a model for aesthetic responses. Celebrations of Verdi's latest opera, in fact, could even function as a form of "telegraphic performance": diasporic pride shaped by the newly rapid and detailed reports of the telegram.

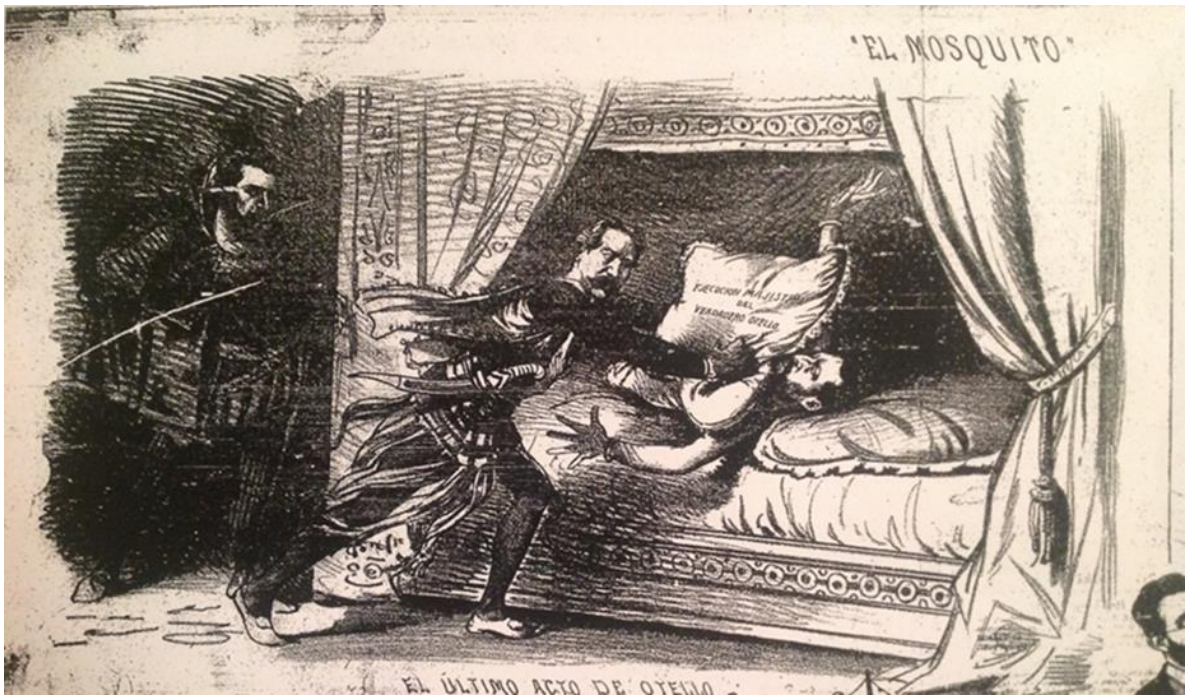

Fig. 1.5. *El Mosquito*, July 1888.

gagliardo e d'un amore sempre vivo dell'arte, finchè è arrivato a questo *Otello*. E l'entusiasmo e l'amore che l'anno scorso aveano invaso i cuori di tutti gli ammiratori del grande maestro nella sua diletta patria, si riproducono oggi al di qua dei mari, in occasione della prima rappresentazione in quest'America dell'ultimo e grande suo lavoro. Migliaia e migliaia di persone, che hanno ingegno, studi, predilezioni, sino la lor parte di gloria, tutte chine, tutte ansiose, per ascoltare la parola dell'ultimo dei giganti viventi, per sentire che cosa ha fatto Verdi, quale è il capolavoro che ha dato al mondo quella patria nostra che, durante molti anni, ha vissuto soltanto nella gloria dell'arte. Quella grande, spirituale Potenza dell'Italia non è finite, perchò ancora le resta lui; l'autore dell'*Otello*. Viva Verdi!" "L'avvenimento del giorno", *L'operaio italiano*, 11-12 June 1888, 1.

[107] Links between Verdi and workers' unions are discussed in Anibal Cetrangolo, *Opera, barcos y banderas: El melodrama y la migración en Argentina (1880-1920)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015), 67-72; several musical bands were associated with Italian unions, and often performed operatic extracts.

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L' OPERAIO ITALIANO

ORGANO DEGLI INTERESSI ITALIANI AL PLATA

GIORNALE QUOTIDIANO DI POLITICA, COMMERCIO, INDUSTRIE, SCIENZE, BELLE ARTI, LETTERATURA, NOTIZIE, AVVISI

L'AVVENIMENTO DEL GIORNO

La prima rappresentazione dell'OTELLO di Giuseppe Verdi nell'America del Sud

Viva Verdi

IL TIPO D'OTELLO

FINALE DELL'ATTO TERZO — Otello respinge Desdemona dinnanzi ai mezzi del Doge.

IL LIBRETTO

Fig. 1.6. *L'operaio italiano*, 12 June 1888.

When the production finally opened, however, many reviewers were reticent to offer more specific pronouncements on the work: too overwhelmed by the mass of writings that had surrounded it in previous months, and too cautious about whether the singers and conducting could match Verdi's own imagination.[108] *L'operaio italiano* was no exception, despite the reviewer improbably claiming to have witnessed over 30 performances of the opera at La Scala and 16 in Brescia (see Fig. 1.6 for the front page coverage of the premiere).[109] The emergence of detailed musical criticism in Argentina in the 1870s – above all in *La Gaceta Musical* – was in that sense confounded by the pressures of mediation: a work already over-determined by previous writings, and with critics anxious about giving a verdict to posterity. Desdemona's Act Four "Ave Maria" proved a particular favourite – an extract that had circulated in manuscript form for months in advance of the premiere – while the double bass ensemble that follows was also scrutinised as evidence of Verdi's new orchestral style. Verdi's orchestration was interpreted as evidence of Shakespearean ambitions, with the overpowering volume of the opera's opening one example of Verdi's profound characterisations.[110] But in general, critics resisted making more specific judgements, instead highlighting the prestige involved in first presenting the opera in the city.[111] Verdi had clearly kept abreast of Wagner and Gounod, critics asserted, and *Otello* was surely a masterpiece; but more specific comments would have to wait for future encounters.

And yet when the second production did arrive, with Tamagno himself as Otello, anxieties about writing on the performances did not evaporate. Indeed, in certain respects they intensified, now shifting away from the work to its central performer. *El Nacional,* for example, declared after the dress rehearsal that:

> Describing how Tamagno interprets and sings *Otello* is difficult, because the written word can't precisely paint certain intimate impressions of the heart […] *Otello* has this one great defect: there isn't more than one Tamagno capable of rendering it with all the force required by the literary drama and the musical drama."[112]

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[108] *El Censor*, 13 June 1888.
[109] "Il grande avvenimento", *L'operaio italiano*, 13 June 1888, 1.
[110] *El Diario*, 7 July 1888.
[111] *El Censor*, 13 June 1888; on prestige, see *El Censor*, 11 June 1888.
[112] "Decir como Tamagno interpreta y canta el Otello es dificil, porque la palabra escrita no pueda pintar exactamente ciertas impresiones intimas del Corazon […] El *Otello* tiene esta gran defecto: no hay mas que un Tamagno capàz de rendirlo con toda la fuerza que requieren el drama literario y el drama lírico." "Ensayo de Otello", *El Nacional*, 5 July 1888, 1.

Other reviewers were quick to echo such sentiments, expressing anxiety about the opera's scope for future performance. "Tamagno [is] the only interpreter who nowadays can cope with this opera", observed *Sud América*; "from his first phrases the public were made aware that they were in front of an unknown Otello, that is to say in front of the "real Otello" […] We understood just yesterday *Otello* in all its glory, that those audacious ones had not even made us glimpse."[113] For *La Nación,* attending Tamagno's *Otello* therefore took on historical urgency: "Tamagno is transformed […] and all this results in a great assembly that one should take advantage of this year, in case we don't hear it again."[114] In trying to capture such an event, the critic could only fall upon vague superlatives: "In *Otello,* Tamagno reached the summit of art: it was impossible to go any higher, in any sense."[115] The Italian-language press reiterated such views, emphasising that the tenor was "unique in the world" and that attempts to describe the performance were fruitless; "never was there so much enthusiasm in the cold public of the Colón, nor perhaps will it ever be seen again".[116] Tamagno's performances in that sense offered a transcendental aesthetic experience whose individuality was potentially at odds with the opera's instantly canonic status and indeed its present involvement in an operatic culture industry. As such, critics in Buenos Aires registered concerns about the nature of Tamagno's live performances that anticipate Peggy Phelan's celebrated claim that "[performance's] only life is in the present"; that "[to] the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology […] Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital."[117] If *Otello* arrived already canonised, as part of a global operatic industry, then Tamagno was at once central to the opera's reception yet problematically irreconcilable with the opera's future. Listening to the opera therefore involved an essential

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[113] "Tamagno, el único interprete que en la actualidad pueda abordar esa ópera […] Apareció el Tamagno y desde sus primeras frases se dió cuenta el publico ilustrado que se hallaba ante un "Otello" desconocido, eso es ante el "verdadero Otello" […] Recien hemos comprendido ayer en todo su valor el *Otello* que los audaces de allá no nos hicieron vislumbrar siquiera." "Ensayo general de *Otello*", *Sud América,* 5 July 1888.
[114] "Tamagno esta transformado […] Y de todo este resulta un conjunto magno que es bueno aprovechar este año, por si no volvemos a oirlo en tales momentos." "El estreno de Otello", *La Nación,* 7 July 1888.
[115] "Tamagno alcanzaba en Otello la cúspide del arte: era imposible ir más allá, en ningun sentido." "Ensayo general de *Otello*", *Sud América,* 5 July 1888.
[116] "Il tenore dalla maravigliosa voce fa una tale creazione del protagonista del capolavoro Verdiano da non ammettere alcuna sorte di confronti. È grande, sommo, inarrivabile! Indipendentemente dai mezzi vocali, unico al mondo […] Non riandiamo la serata: bisognerebbe citare frase per frase, nota per nota: si volle due volte l'Ora e per sempre addio sante memorie, si avrebbe desiderato il bis di tutto! Mai si vide per un uomo tanto entusiasmo nel freddo pubblico del Colon, nè forse più si rivedrà." "Palcoscenico e Platea: La prima dell'"Otello" al Colon", *L'operaio italiano,* 7 July 1888.
[117] Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction", in her *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 146-166; quotations from 146-8.

yet ultimately inexpressible task: the generation of collective auditory memory, that could compensate for the tenor's ephemeral voice in the future.[118]

Assertions about Tamagno's inimitability were not naïve, however. Argentine critics were quick to acknowledge the press reports from Italy that had preceded the performance, and Verdi's involvement in preparing the role; given the time-lag in receiving the work, *La Prensa* could even publish an article discussing Maurel's production book (and Tamagno's powerful delivery of the role) before the Colón's opening night, canonising the interpretation further at source.[119] Alongside the opera's future performance problems, writers also concerned themselves with the ways in which their encounter with *Otello* was already always mediated through their generation of collective auditory memories of an imagined original, and a predicted set of aesthetic responses, that ultimately challenged claims about Tamagno's immediate presence:

> What can one say of the great Tamagno? You will find this artist shielded from criticism: the influence of his fame and the memory of all that the Italian press has said in praise of him regarding his creation of *Otello* will protect him. He will be the hero, he will fill with his presence the great scene, and he will set off explosions of applause with the huge explosions of his voice […] Tomorrow, the night of *Otello's* premiere, we will be able to surrender ourselves in the ambience of a room animated by the splendour of luxury and distinction, with the charm of Verdi's music and the voice of Tamagno, the two elements of triumph that will stand out in the harmonious ensemble of the show.[120]

Uniquely equipped though Tamagno might be in the role, the tenor's longstanding familiarity in Buenos Aires made it apparent how just much he had gained from Verdi's interventions, and indeed brought into question the transcendental agency attributed to him in other reviews. The *Otello* competition followed on from an earlier overlap of Tamagno and Stagno in the city three years earlier, further highlighting the improvement that Tamagno's singing had

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[118] For a related discussion of operatic listening in the context of a (then emerging) operatic canon, see Flora Willson, "Of Time and the City: Verdi's *Don Carlos* and its Parisian Critics", *19th-Century Music* 37/3 (2014), 188-210.

[119] "El Yago del *Otello*", *La Prensa*, 6 July 1888, 4.

[120] "Que decir del gran Tamagno? Hallase este artista á cubierto de la critica; lo proteje el influjo de su fama y el recuerdo de todo lo que en su elogio ha dicho la prensa italiana á propósito de su creacion de Otello. El será el héreo, llenará con su presencia el gran cuadro de la opera y arrancará espolsiones de aplausos con las esplosiones de su voz portentosa […] Mañana, noche de estreno de *Otello*, podremos entregarnos por completo, en al ambien e de una sala animada por el esplendor del lujo y de la distincion, al encanto de la música de Verdi y de la voz de Tamagno, los dos elementos de triunfo de se destacarán en el conjunto armónico del espectáculo." "El "Otello" en Colon", *El Censor*, 5 July 1888.

undergone through Verdi's coaching. "Tamagno will be simply admirable", declared *La Patria* in advance of the opening night. "This part written for him, for his extraordinary vocal resources, suits him more perhaps than any other […] It is easily understood that Tamagno achieves wonders in this role; it was written for him, and he was taught it by maestro Verdi himself."[121] If listening to *Otello* on one level meant listening via Milan, the experience of *Otello* in Buenos Aires was so predetermined that the apparatus of the performance was immediately obvious, and raised questions about the opera's future viability. And at the same time, awareness of the Milanese reception and of Tamagno's training brought into question Tamagno's own agency: a performer whose success was preordained and who arrived enmeshed in media hype; a singer, in fact, thoroughly embedded in the commodity culture that his live presence purported to resist.

Tamagno-Otello

Tamagno's Otello eventually arrived in New York in March 1890, on a tour arranged by Henry Abbey, that likewise featured Patti, and served as a warm-up for Abbey's return to the Met management in 1891.[122] News reports in New York again trumpeted Tamagno's unique qualifications in the role and the prestige of his visit: "with regard to voice, expression, and delivery, nobody I know can touch Tamagno. All that you have read and heard of the great tenors and their lost art is revived in Tamagno."[123] For *The Independent,* meanwhile, the sizeable crowd for these performances was not certain proof of Italian opera's revival, but "[the] curiosity to hear "Otello" much better done than it was some years ago, the renowned *Otello* of Mr Tamagno and a pleasurable expectation of Mme. Albani's artistic vocalism, were the three magnetic factors."[124] Tamagno proved the undoubted highlight, celebrated in tones strikingly similar to that in Buenos Aires:

> One thing is clear; that the model for all tenors who undertake Otello can and will be Mr Tamagno. A man of more imposing presence of Mr Salvini; with immense but well-controlled physical energy and fine facial mobility, Mr Tamagno realizes in his person the

[121] "Tamagno estará simplemente admirable. Aquel papel escrito para él, para sus extraordinarias dotes vocales le conviene más tal vez que otro alguno […] Se comprende fácilmente que Tamagno realice prodigios en el Otello; ha sido escrito para él y le ha sido enseñado por el mismo maestro Verdi." "El Otello en Colon", *La Patria*, 4 July 1888.
[122] By this Tamagno had already returned to Buenos Aires to sing *Otello* alongside Victor Maurel, a set of performances that was a further success for the singer.
[123] Louis Fengel, *New York Spirit of the Times*, 27 July 1889.
[124] *The Independent*, 3 April 1890.

> character. In his extraordinary force and freedom in playing the role he must be quite a revelation to some people of how impressive a tragedian an operatic singer can be […] Through the whole opera Mr Tamagno's identification with the character is complete and intense; and with his physical adaptability to Otello (as is the case with Salvini) he cannot be easily approached in it.[125]

The Met staging was condemned as "a ridiculous burlesque of Venice, Bagdad, the North Sea, Paris or any place else", a problem that was considered especially acute given the close coordination between sound and image in Verdi's latest opera, that could hardly withstand such lack of care for details of operatic production.[126] But again, these same reports stressed Tamagno's irreplaceability: the tenor was "singularly gifted by nature with those qualities most intimately associated with the heroic figures of the lyric stage [...] In short, Signor Tamagno has fully justified the reputation which preceded him, and proved himself a truly great artist."[127] *Il progresso italo-americano* demonstrated further familiarity with Italian reviews of *Otello*'s premiere, while proclaiming *Otello*'s return with Tamagno in place as a sign of New York's operatic ascendancy: "Never, perhaps, as the other night, have the public of the Metropolitan Opera House justified their reputation as the foremost public in the United States [...] never, as the other night, has it showed itself worthy of the great artistic event, that they were called to attend and with which began a short series of performances of Italian opera in New York. Tamagno […] extraordinary, unimaginable."[128] Subsequent reviews of Tamagno's performances in Verdi's *Il trovatore* offered an almost verbatim copy

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[125] Ibid. Comparisons with Salvini were timely: the actor had performed *Otello* at New York's Broadway Theatre on 8 March 1890, part of an American tour that had proved a mixed box-office success on account of the actor's over-familiarity and fatigue at bilingual performances. See "Amusements", *The New York Times*, 9 March 1890.

[126] *The Independent*, 3 April 1890. Similar complaints about the staging were voiced elsewhere: Verdi's opera was composed with "a conscientious and deeply studied design", lamented *The Critic*, and "when the minute stage-directions are so frequently ignored", the opera cannot be said to have been properly presented. *The Critic*, 5 April 1890. Two decades later, Henry Krehbiel of the *New York Tribune* would concur in his memories of the Campanini tour that "as fully as Wagner in his "Lohengrin", [Verdi] indicates the bodily movements that are to go hand in hand with music. In the picture of a storm which opens the opera the manipulator of the artificial lighting is not left to his discretion as to the proper moment for discharging his *brutum fulmen*; in the love duet […] the appearance of the moon and stars is sought to be intensified by descriptive effects in the music". Henry Krehbiel, *Chapters of Opera* (New York: Henry Holt, 1909), 192.

[127] *The Critic*, 5 April 1890. Looking back a few months later, *The New York Times* recalled Henry Abbey's "slipshod production of 'Otello', with Tamagno's wonderful impersonation as its central figure". "A Significant Record: Review of the New York Musical Season, 1889-90", *The New York Times*, 17 August 1890.

[128] "Mai, forse, come l'altra sera, il pubblico della 'Metropolitan Opera House' ha giustificato la reputazione di primo pubblico degli Stati Uniti; mai, come la'altra sera il suo contegno fu serio così da dar valore e solennità ai suoi giudizi; mai, come la'altra sera, s'e mostrazo degno del grande avennimento artistico, al quale fu chiamato ad assistere e col qual s'inaugurava breve corso di rappresentazioni in New York dell'Opera Italiana." "Il Tamagno […] straordinaria, inimmaginabile." *"L'Otello* alla Metropolitan Opera House", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 26 March 1890.

of *Il secolo*'s comments on the second Milanese performance of *Otello*, revealing the extent to which the editors sought to cultivate pre-existing Milanese responses amongst its readership.[129]

For many critics in the English-language press, *Otello* indicated a stylistic shift on Verdi's part, with references to Gounod, Massenet and Verdi's earlier work nestling alongside comparisons with Wagner. But alongside the opera's Shakespearean grandeur, the opera also offered less exhausting musical pleasures than German repertoire – ones that would not muddle the mind with the tropes of "modern musical criticism", in the words of *The Evening Post*; high-minded fashions that were more likely to seem "an inducement to suicide" for the reader.[130] Tamagno's arrival in New York overall furthered a growing sense of tedium with the German seasons, and a belief that German composers did not produce masterpieces with any greater regularity than the Italians. Worries about declining attendance at the Met by the early 1890s ultimately forced the Met to reconsider its model, and a move to a mixture of Italian and German repertoire by 1891.[131] By the time Tamagno finally sang Otello at the Met as part of the regular season in 1894, *Otello* had also finally made its Parisian debut with Tamagno, and was a familiar international event. Jean de Reszke had offered a single performance of *Otello* at the Met in 1892, in a production directed by well-known Wagnerite Theodor Habelmann – a production that was a notable failure, despite the tenor's local popularity and costumes clearly modelled on the La Scala originals.[132] Tamagno's arrival alongside Maurel (in a new production designed by William Parry) aroused interest as well as mixed responses, with praise for the tenor's commitment accompanied by complaints over the amateurish designs. "[W]e may not look in this country for the perfection of scenery and stage management which are conspicuous features of the Paris opera, [but] *Otello* was adequately staged at the Metropolitan, and the most exacting audience would have found it difficult to criticise other than favourably this admirable trio of artists", observed *Harper's Bazaar*.[133] The Met's company board had given exceptional

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[129] "nello spiegare tutto il tesoro della sua splendide voce a facendo in più d'un punto le meraviglie universali"; "Il "Trovatore" alla "Metropolitan"", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 29 March 1890.
[130] "Italian Opera", Alan Dale, *The Evening World*, 25 March 1890, 3. Shakespeare's canonical status in the USA by this time has been much-discussed, particularly since the publication of Lawrence Levine's "William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation", *American Historical Review* 89/1 (1984), 34-66. See also Michael D. Bristol, *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[131] "Opera costs too much: That's why the Metropolitan is not generously patronised", October 1892 (NYPL Metropolitan Opera clippings).
[132] *Otello* with Reszke had among the lowest box office returns of the season: see Mayer, *The Met*, 45. Reszke's *Otello* costumes are still held at the Met archives.
[133] *Harper's Bazaar*, 15 December 1894.

permission for a loan to be made to Abbey & Grau to secure Tamagno and Maurel's involvement; and Tamagno's involvement was a "tremendous factor" in the production's success according to the press.[134] Remarkable, too, was the difference between Tamagno's performances in *Otello* and in his other repertoire: "[even] the mannerisms of Tamagno, so offensive as a rule, acquire meaning and eloquence under the inspiration of Verdi's score."[135] Unique as an interpreter of Verdi's opera, Tamagno's Otello also emerges as a singular product of Verdi's craft – a theatrical trick that the tenor could not reliably replicate elsewhere.

As *Otello* arrived in both New York and Buenos Aires, it is therefore clear that staging challenges posed by Verdi's latest work were on critics' minds, and that transatlantic operatic transfer on this scale of ambition raised practical and theoretical problems that reflected new degrees of technological interconnection between Milan and the Americas, as well as continued geographical distance. And in both cities, Tamagno's Otello emerged as a key site of discussion, raising questions about the status of live performance in the present as well as *Otello*'s viability in the future. What emerges from the critical reception of these productions, I would suggest, is at one level a sensitivity to the opera's mediality: a sense both of *Otello*' s immediate canonicity and deeply textualized status, and of the critic's duty to record the dimensions of the performance that will inevitably vanish. Tamagno's standing as the original performer of the uniquely challenging title role – and a "star singer" belonging to a performer-oriented tradition – raised questions about *Otello*'s future, and the contemporary listener's responsibilities: fantasies of "preserving the voices of the dead" that anticipate the rhetoric of early sound-recording technologies in their concern for reproduction. At the same time, however, reviews in both New York and Buenos Aires reveal an awareness of the weight of previous writings and performances on their perceptions of *Otello*; and indeed a sense in which Tamagno himself operated both as a marker of ephemerality within the performance, and as a sign of its mediatisation: a product of Verdi's craft, who had arguably also left his own mark upon Verdi's work. Anxieties about leaving judgements for posterity were hardly new; and experiences of "canonic listening" were by then familiar: Wagner's arrival in both cities had certainly ensured that.[136] But *Otello*'s status

[134] A telegram message from Henry Abbey is recorded in the Met's board minutes in September 1894, asking for an advance of $20,000: "I have had many heavy advances to make [sic] than last year on account of Tamagno, Maurel. I would not ask it, were it not absolutely necessary to carry out our opera". Metropolitan Opera Board Minutes, 18 September 1894.
[135] "'Otello' at the Opera", *New York Tribune*, 4 December 1894, 7.
[136] On "canonic listening" in 1860s Paris – the anticipation of sustained interaction with a musical work – see again Willson, "Of Time and the City".

as a media event in Milan, and a uniquely texted Italian work on tour – a music drama every bit as theatrically challenging as *Lohengrin* or *Walküre* – drew attention to new operatic experiences of simultaneity, and to the limits of such fantasies in the present and future: a problem in which Tamagno loomed large.

What these reviews ultimately suggest, I would argue, is a sensitivity to the new material and commercial dynamics shaping Italian operatic culture by the late nineteenth century: a situation in which an emergent culture industry joined a repertory centred largely on canonical works, to engender a newly modern sense of mechanical reproduction. And New York and Buenos Aires were particularly well-placed to understand this: not just because they were physically remote from Milan, but because their very positioning as "New" was rooted in an imaginative relationship with the Old: in a constant negotiation between the weight of the European past and a reimagination of the future. Stephen Kern's observations on the emergent sense of the present being "thickened temporally with retentions and protentions of past and future" is thus strikingly laid bare by Tamagno's Otello in these cities: a focal point for shifting attitudes towards the musical and temporal present.[137] Tamagno's Otello was at once "live" and emblem of repetition; a moment of performance that was embedded in a reproductive economy. Peggy Phelan's utopian vision of performance resisting a capitalist economy is thus challenged by a more complex experience of performance marked by the past and extending into the future, and deeply embedded in industrial production: resistance emerging from within its very structures and indelibly entwined with it.[138] One might even consider this perception of *Otello*'s reproducibility and ever-present mediation – one in which Tamagno was problematically involved – within the framework of "deadness" (in Benjamin Piekut and Jason Stanyeks's formulation): a "mutually effective co-laboring" between past and present, that describes the "distended temporalities and spatialities of all performance, much the same way that all ontologies are really hauntologies, spurred into being through the portended traces of too many histories to name and too many futures to subsume in a stable, locatable present."[139] Piekut and Stanyek's focus is broadly upon late capitalism, yet I would suggest this terminology is strikingly well-suited to late-nineteenth century Italian operatic culture: one in which operatic performance is

[137] Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, 314.
[138] Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance".
[139] Benjamin Piekut and Jason Stanyek, "Deadness: Technologies of the Intermundane", *TDR: The Drama Review* 54/1 (2010), 14-38; quotation from 20. Piekut and Stanyek's terminology is a self-conscious (and clearly Derridean) revision of Philip Auslander's historicization of "liveness", with "deadness" underlining the involvement of all performances with past presences in a late capitalist economy. On "liveness", see Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999).

largely centred upon past works; in which new works come shadowed by the presence of the past; and in which a work such as *Otello* will almost inevitably be repeated ad infinitum. Listening to Tamagno is to hear a voice that will vanish and which needs to be recorded for posterity, one that Verdi has already somehow inscribed into the work. Performances of *Otello* thus reveal themselves as an interface with deadness: the repetition of operatic life revealed at its fullest, in which anxieties about future performance are shadowed by the weight of past writings. Ultimately, I would argue, Tamagno's Otello merited attention because the "sounding object" embodied both by Tamagno and *Otello* was one that raised questions about the relationships New York and Buenos Aires would have with the operatic past in their own future.

Voices from Beyond

Even as audiences in the New World pondered the significance of Tamagno's Otello, readers in Milan were kept closely abreast of *Otello*'s international progress. Write-ups in newspapers and journals about *Otello*'s performances in New York and Buenos Aires demonstrated a keen awareness of how important Tamagno had become for the opera's international success, and an interest in the reactions provoked by the circulation of operatic commodities. According to *Il mondo artistico* – a theatrical journal that offered a broad coverage of foreign operatic activity – Campanini's tour had been a "complete success", and the triumph of *Otello* in New York had moreover signalled the return of Italian opera to the city.[140] Tiring of the German repertoire, audiences had expressed hunger for Verdi's new work, in a vindication of Campanini's efforts to bring the work across the Atlantic at unusual speed.[141] References to the details of Campanini's staging – including the costumiers in Milan – moreover appeared to chime with emerging efforts elsewhere to promote Italian activity abroad as a form of covert colonialism.[142] Yet these reports necessarily also had to deal selectively with the press reports in New York itself, and reviews reprinted in *Il mondo artistico* and the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* displayed a strikingly partial view of the opera's American reception. New York had been "seduced" by Verdi's new work, the latter exclaimed, while selective quotations from the *Musical Courier, American Art Journal* and the dailies focused upon Campanini and Eva Tetrazzini's achievements on the tour rather

[140] *Il mondo artistico*, 26 April 1888.
[141] *Il mondo artistico*, 6 May 1888, 2-3.
[142] On this, see Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

than Marconi's failure or the problems with the staging.[143] News of the *Otello* race in Buenos Aires was likewise enthusiastically reported as evidence of the global impact of Verdi's latest work; while Tamagno's arrival provoked gushing commentary from Argentine correspondents who also voiced the opinions of Italian newspapers within Buenos Aires. "*Otello* at the Colon was a triumph. An immense crowd – writes *La patria italiana* – with the President of the Republic in attendance: all of the best theatre critics. Verdi's score, which was made audible to us by the orchestra and the artists at the Colón, is a score that arrests the mind and exalts the heart. The first note of *Otello* is an affirmation of genius; the last is the seal on the musical power of Verdi. Tamagno (Otello), immense, unsurpassable."[144] A review a few months later echoed these sentiments and underlined further Tamagno's unique historical position in relation to the opera. "*Otello*…oh, *Otello* is another kettle of fish! Tamagno is the summit, and I cannot say more on the matter, because I do not know how to."[145] When Tamagno finally arrived at the Met in 1890 on Abbey's tour, *Il mondo artistico* was again explicit in noting that "the interest of the public naturally centred upon Tamagno, the hero of the evening"; and they reported with pleasure the impresario's revival of Italian language opera at a theatre that had previously exiled him in favour of German repertoire.[146] Tamagno's return several years later was likewise crowned as a triumph for the Met, and the opera's growing popularity demonstrated by the rush of performances taking place along the East Coast during Tamagno and Maurel's visit.[147]

The attention given to Tamagno's success in these reviews, and his centrality to *Otello*'s international reception, thus in turn mediated American perceptions of the productions back into Milan. Tamagno-Otello – born in the Americas – was eventually internalised in Milan in part via the international press. While in New York and Buenos Aires such a mythology reflected their own complex relationship with the operatic future, in Milan these comments were articulated in startingly nationalist terms. An obituary of Tamagno in August 1905 by director and librettist Renato Simoni, for example, argued that "romantic

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[143] See "*Otello* e la stampa di Nuova-York", *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 6 May 1888; "Ancora *Otello* e la stampa di Nuova-York", *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 13 May 1888; and *Il mondo artistico*, 17 June 1888, 7.
[144] "*Otello* al Colon è stato un trionfo. Folla immense – scrive la *Patria Italiana* – dal Presidente della Republicca in giù: tutto il meglio della critica teatrale. Lo spartito di Verdi, quale ce l'ha fatto udire l'orchestra e gli artisti di Colón, è uno spartito che soggioga il pensiero ed esalta il cuore. La prima nota d'*Otello* è un'affermazione del genio: l'ultima il suggello della potenza musicale di Verdi. Tamagno (Otello), immenso, inarrivabile." *Il mondo artistico*, 11 August 1888, 7.
[145] "L'*Otello*...oh l'*Otello* è un altro paio di maniche! Tamagno è *sommo*, e dicendevi ciò non posso dirvi altro, poichè non saprei dirlo." *Il mondo artistico*, 3 September 1888, 4.
[146] "L'interesse però del pubblico si concentrò naturalmente nel Sig. Tamagno, che è l'eroe della serata". "Dall'America dell Nord", *Il mondo artistico*, 16 April 1890, 3.
[147] "Dall'America del Nord", *Il mondo artistico*, 1 January 1895, 7.

musical theatre, ultimately sentimental, is in decline. The new lyric scene asserts itself, the singer is no longer served by it."[148] But the sounds of Tamagno's "Esultate!" from *Otello* on the gramophone – the inevitable repository for the tenor's legendary interpretation – could nevertheless evoke two centuries of Italian perseverance in the face of foreign oppression, a nationalism centred upon the operatic voice:

> We reverently salute this voice that disappears. It is something of old Italy, if it is not one of the last traits of the past, which dissolves in this great transformation of the homeland and of the Italians. That great singing was not just the golden years of Tamagno; it was two centuries, two centuries of our glory [...] It was the voice that had shouted "Italy" in the face of the Austrians, the barbarians, the priests; it was the last statement of superiority, in the face of the other peoples, of this Italy that had been epic, lyricist, politician, painter, modeler, artillery teacher, fancy, beauty, wisdom, and joy; And now, with tired muscles, sang, sang, sang, to hide from the spectators inside and outside of the Alps the silence of our hearts and of our wills, that stretch out upon our beautiful cities, that have become museums.[149]

In the hyperbole of Simoni's obituary, Tamagno's voice – one famously shaped by Verdi – is imbued with the power to summon up generations of Italian revolutionaries; indeed, singing itself becomes a means of military resistance against outsiders, with Tamagno's all-powerful instrument a metaphor for Italian physical might. The gramophone's reassuring sounds promise that both Tamagno and Italy will rise up again – that national identity and strength can be as durably recorded as vocal lines on a wax cylinder. By the early 1900s, "Tamagno-Otello" thus functions both to re-insert presence back into the operatic artefact, and to offer a reassuring mythology to buttress Italian musical identity: an uncanny presence within the opera's iconography, becoming increasingly potent as the singer's own voice receded into historical distance. One might even say, therefore, that the "Tamagno-Otello" legend functioned by 1905 precisely as an example of what Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht has dubbed

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[148] "Il romanticismo musicale teatrale, e in fondo anche sentimentale, tramonta. La scena lirica nuova asserva a sè il cantante non è più asservita ad esso." "Tamagno", *Il mondo artistico*, 11 September 1905, 1.

[149] "Salutiamo con riverenza questa voce che scompare. E'qualche cosa della vecchia Italia se non è uno degli ultimi tratti caratteristici del passato, che si dissolve in questa grande mutazione di fisonomie della patria e degli italiani. Quel gran soffio canoro non aveva solo gli anni verdi di Tamagno; aveva due secoli, due secoli di gloria nostra […] Era la voce che aveva gridato "Italia" in faccia agli austriaci, ai barbari, ai preti; era l'ultima affermazione di superiorità davanti agli altri popoli, di questa Italia che era stata epica, lírica, politica, pittrice, modellatrice, maestra di architettura, di fantasia, di belleza, di saggezza e di gioia; e che ora, con i muscoli stanchi, con i garretti molli, cantava, cantava, cantava, per nascondere agli spettatori dentro e fuori dalle alpi il silenzio dei cuori e delle volontà che si distendeva sulle nostre belle città divenute musei." Ibid.

presentification: the longing for direct material engagement in response to modernity's emphasis on mechanical repetition.[150]

Yet beyond the figure of Tamagno and the "legendary Moor", there is a broader point here: one as much to do with Verdi, and the fantasies of Italian identity and Risorgimento history attached to him, as with Tamagno. Like *Otello*, Verdi's national and Risorgimento image had been reproduced and circulated domestically and abroad as part of *Otello*'s global tour – an idea smoothly assimilated and amplified by foreign audiences and readers in cities vying with Milan for Italian operatic centrality.[151] And without doubt, international perceptions of Verdi's *italianità* and national importance supplemented such ideas back in Italy: the *Otello* special issue of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* is a clear example. But there is a sense in which the industrialisation of Verdi's music and image within an emerging Italian culture industry also helped to sustain the composer's mythical patriotic status within Italy: giving new force to ideas of Verdi's innate relationship with the Italian public and his role in shaping a national consciousness. The elision in Alessandro Casati's article around the La Scala premiere, for example, from expressions of the technological sublime at the *Otello* media event to boilerplate nationalism suggests a crucial link between Verdi's mediatisation and his political image. The legacy of "Verdi, Vate of the Risorgimento" within Italy, like "Tamagno-Otello", might then have as much to do with Italy's shifting position within an emerging culture industry (and the rise of New York and Buenos Aires) as with authorial intention or insular nation-building. One might be tempted to argue that both figures are fundamentally auratic – the allure of the original in a reproductive economy, in Walter Benjamin's formulation. Yet perhaps it is more accurate that both figures are closer to a Derridean "trace": a simulacrum of presence that continually refers beyond itself, in contrast to "remainder effects" that offer a "present, idealizable, ideally iterable residue": remainder effects like a staging manual, score, recording or inscription of VIVA V.E.R.D.I.[152] Through both mythologies, an image of the Italian operatic past persists within a mediatised culture and a shifting operatic geography; Verdi and *Otello* "sing, sing, sing" on stages beyond Italy, but still resound within the nation's political imagination.

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[150] Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[151] *Verdi e l'Otello* contained an extensive discussion of Verdi's patriotism, for example, including the acrostic VIVA V.E.R.D.I: see 2-8.

[152] See Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machines*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), especially 150-3. Piekut and Stanyek's conception of "deadness", as noted earlier, is clearly informed by Derrida and reinforces this line of argument.

Chapter Two

Performing Italy: *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, and Southern *italianità*

In March 1889, Milanese publishing firm Fratelli Treves issued the latest collection of travel writings by Edmondo de Amicis. One of Italy's best-selling authors, De Amicis had recently enjoyed a tremendous success with *Cuore* (1886), a patriotic work of children's fiction that featured Garibaldi's death among its major plot developments. De Amicis' latest work pursued his socialist sympathies in a new direction, however. *Sull'oceano* chronicled the author's journey from Genoa to Buenos Aires five years earlier, recording the characters and events he experienced onboard the ship *Galileo*. Leaving aside the lives passengers would lead once they arrived, De Amicis's focus was instead on the circumstances that had prompted members of various social classes to make the three-week journey, and on the interplay between individuals onboard their temporary home.

As De Amicis recounts, the *Galileo* offered an unparalleled overview of the divisions of contemporary Italian society: from the pampered passengers in first-class, to the impoverished masses in steerage, alongside Italian émigrés already living in Argentina – all conveyed in one of "those colossal boats that carry blood to the New World and bring back treasure to the old".[1] For the first few days, De Amicis's fascination was directed especially at the ship itself, both a floating city and a "grim sea monster" sucking up Italian blood. An introduction to the commissary soon gave De Amicis privileged access to the ship's passengers, and an insight into the complex attachments held by many Italian citizens to their homeland, in a vehicle that was "not only a large village […] but a little state".[2] In De Amicis's account, the *Galileo* in fact emerges as a quintessential heterotopia, in which interactions between social classes as well as national identities are delineated and reshaped, in the space between an abandoned past and an (as yet) unattained future.[3]

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[1] All quotations are taken from the 1897 New York edition, *On Blue Water*, trans. Jacob B. Brown (New York, London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 36. A selection of writings by Italian émigrés living in the USA is contained in Francesco Durante, Robert Viscusi, Anthony Julian Tamburri & James J. Periconi, eds., *Italoamericano: The Literature of the Great Migration* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).
[2] *On Blue Water*, 3 and 34.
[3] Michel Foucault explores the idea of the heterotopia in "Des Espaces Autres", published in *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (October 1984), 46–9; reprinted in *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, ed. Michiel Dehaene & Lieven de Cauter (London: Routledge, 2008), 13-30. Laura Tunbridge has also recently drawn upon Foucault's terminology in her study of Lieder singers in London and New York: see her *Singing in the Age of Anxiety: Lieder Performances in London and New York Between the World Wars* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018), 13-15.

Sull'oceano was another major commercial success for De Amicis. The travelogue was quickly reprinted and translated into several foreign languages – including editions in New York and Buenos Aires – and *Sull'oceano* became especially popular among diasporic and working-class readerships: a survey from 1906 revealed that over 10% of the *Società bibliografica italiana* had read the book.[4] De Amicis's account is characterised above all by its sympathetic portrayal of emigrant workers, tracing their sense of abandonment by the Italian state as well as estrangement from wealthier passengers onboard. Meetings with Argentines onboard also exposed the polarised attitudes held by many Italian and Argentine citizens: if both parties demonstrated national pride, "we base ours upon the past, and always pique ourselves upon that", commented De Amicis, while "they seldom, if ever, spoke of it, but looked to the future with the child's constant phrase, 'When we are grown up!'"[5] Embracing Italian immigration as a source of economic enrichment, Argentines imagined themselves as a people destined to become pre-eminent on the global stage – a development pushing Italy into the position of a bygone cultural satellite.

Alongside images of Italian poverty, *Sull'oceano* made room for the most privileged travellers onboard, including a noisy tenor travelling to perform in Montevideo – a reminder of more longstanding forms of transatlantic movement, albeit now operating at a considerably higher degree of comfort.[6] The upper classes were not unique in enjoying Italian music, however. Passengers in third class included "farmers from around Firenzuola, some of whom, as often happens, may have laid aside the mattock to become wandering musicians", together with "harpers and fiddlers from the Basilicata and the Abruzzo"; De Amicis also encountered "Lombard singers chatting and laughing with theatrical ease" as well as individuals from Southern regions displaying a pronounced passion for music. On meeting the Argentine delegate, De Amicis observed that knowledge of European musical life was also comprehensive amongst Argentines onboard, because "they had Europe over to dance and sing for them in their place".[7] Music here appears a strikingly mobile signifier of Italian identity and cultural allegiance – one that operates as a dependable token of national and

[4] Emilio Franzina, *L'immaginario degli emigranti: Miti e raffigurazioni dell'esperienza italiana all'estero fra due secoli* (Paese: PAGUS, 1992), 81.
[5] *On Blue Water*, 218.
[6] On earlier forms of operatic mobility from Italy to Buenos Aires, see John Rosselli, "The Opera Business and the Italian Immigrant Community in Latin America 1820-1930: The Example of Buenos Aires", *Past and Present* 127/1 (1990), 155-82; and Benjamin Walton, "Italian Operatic Fantasies in Latin America", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17/4 (2012), 460–71.
[7] *On Blue Water*, 33, 88, and 217.

cosmopolitan connection, yet disturbs easy distinctions between classes and socio-ethnic groups.

Sull'oceano's publication was timely. By 1889, emigration from Italy to the Americas was developing at an unprecedented rate: between 1876 and 1890, annual rates of emigration from Italy had more than doubled, with nearly 60% of emigrants choosing to venture across the Atlantic – an annual influx of over 100,000 Italians to the Americas each year.[8] If emigration presented an overwhelmingly impoverished image of Italy, operatic performances had long complicated such simplistic views in New York and Buenos Aires, inviting more nuanced accounts of contemporary Italian culture. The repertoire expected to be sung by the *Galileo*'s tenor remains unknown; references by other passengers circled around French works and venerable repertory items, such as "[Charles Gounod's] *Polyeucte* at the Colón Theatre; and at the Solís, [Luigi and Federico Ricci's] *Crispino e la Comare* with Baldelli".[9] Concerns about Italian operatic decline had been widely voiced around *Otello*'s premiere; yet the debut of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890) – shortly after *Sull'oceano*'s publication – appeared to many critics to mark a creative revival of Italian opera: a work that would surely have featured in the tenor's future repertoire, in Montevideo or elsewhere. Mascagni's adaptation of Giovanni Verga's short story (1880) soon made the journey across the Atlantic, quickly appearing in tandem with Leoncavallo's similarly brief *Pagliacci* (1892).[10] As depictions of poverty and violence set in the Italian south, the operas became a focal point for wider debates about Italian identity in both Italy and the Americas, as commentators sought to define Italy (and Italian opera's) position within international social and aesthetic hierarchies. If these debates were shaped by earlier ideas of *italianità*, discussions unsurprisingly had renewed impetus in an era of rapid demographic change: debates played

[8] These statistics are drawn from Samuel Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 27. On Italian emigration in this period, see also John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven, 1978); Fernando Devoto & Gianfausto Rosoli, eds., *La Inmigración Italiana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1985); Donna Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988). For a more recent study of emigration from the perspective of Italy, see Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); and Donna R. Gabaccia*, Italy's Many Diasporas* (London: UCL Press, 2000), especially 45-128.

[9] *On Blue Water*, 347.

[10] Verga's story was included in his collection of Sicilian-set stories, *Vita dei campi* (1880), published by the Treves firm in Milan. On Verga, see for example Giacomo Debendetti, *Verga e il naturalismo* (Milan: Garzanti, 1976); and Alessio Baldini, "The Liberal Imagination of Giovanni Verga: Verismo as Moral Realism*", The Italianist* 37/7 (2017), 348-68.

out in both the diasporic and "native" press, and shaping a particular role for Italian opera within the musical networks of the late nineteenth century.

In what follows, I therefore reassess the early reception of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, considering how the two operas participated in defining ideas of *italianità* at this time. Recent investigations of Italian opera's reception history in Buenos Aires and New York by Anibal Cetrangolo, Davide Ceriani and Stefano Luconi have largely focused on ethnic tensions, particularly in the years following 1900.[11] These accounts have highlighted anti-Italian sentiments by prominent musical reporters (and their links with social discrimination), while underlining the importance of Italian opera to identity formation in Italian diasporic communities – above all Verdi.[12] Yet these polarised critical responses, I would suggest, often concealed a more middle-ground cultural reality. Binaries between highbrow and lowbrow, foreign and local may have been prominent features of operatic discourse in both cities, and indeed in Italy; but these categories were highly permeable, and informed by a wider international perspective on operatic culture at the fin de siècle.[13] The double bill of "Cav and Pag" offers a particularly revealing case study given its topicality and rich discursive history, and can suggest broader continuities within a period of major urban transformation. Above all, the operas' interplay between explicitly contemporary modes of representation and older tropes of the European South made them an important vehicle for redefining ideas of *italianità* on the global stage: ones that suggest a more multi-layered understanding of Italy's relationship to music at the close of the nineteenth century.

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[11] Anibal E. Cetrangolo, *Opera, Barcos y Banderas: El Melodrama y la Migracion en la Argentina* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015); and "Opera e identidad en el encuentro migratorio: El melodrama italiano en Argentina entre 1880 y 1920" (PhD dissertation, University of Valladolid, 2010). Cetrangolo's arguments about musical nationalism respond to scholars including Malena Kuss, "Nativistic Strains in Argentine Operas Premiered at the Teatro Colón (1908-1972)" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1976). On New York, see in particular Davide Ceriani, "Italianizing the Metropolitan Opera House: Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Era and the Politics of Opera in New York City, 1908-1935" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2011), and his chapter "Opera as Social Agent: Fostering Italian Identity at the Metropolitan Opera House During the Early Years of Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Management (1908-1910)", in *Music, Longing and Belonging: Articulations of the Self and Other in the Musical Realm,* ed. Magdalena Waligórska (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 114-35.

[12] On Verdi, see again Stefano Luconi, "Opera as a Nationalistic Weapon: The Erection of the Monument to Giuseppe Verdi in New York City", *Italian Americana* 34/1 (2016), 37-64.

[13] For a related argument dealing with the USA, see Larry Hamberlin, *Tin Pan Opera: Operatic Novelty Songs in the Ragtime Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially 3-70. See also Ana Cara-Walker, "Cocoliche: The Art of Assimilation and Dissimulation among Italians and Argentines", *Latin American Research Review* 22/3 (1987), 37-67, for a discussion of Italo-Argentine parody performance.

A Southern Dawn

The premiere of *Cavalleria rusticana* at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome on 17 May 1890 has long been a *locus classicus* in discussions of operatic renewal in late nineteenth-century Italy.[14] Performed as part of publisher Edoardo Sonzogno's competition for one-act operas by young Italian composers, Mascagni's work was one of three presented at Sonzogno's behest, and received in a context ripe with nationalist discourse.[15] Advertising the competition in 1888, *Il teatro illustrato* – Sonzogno's house magazine – had invited submissions by young composers on "a pastoral, serious or comic theme", cautioning that "the music of the works hoping to win should be inspired by Italian tradition, without renouncing the splendid results of recent investigations into sound".[16] The difficulties of striking such a balance were clear: the competition had previously run in 1884 with Luigi Mapelli's *Anna e Gualberto* and Guglielmo Zuelli's *La fata del Nord* tying for first place. Presented together at the Teatro Manzoni (on 4 May 1884), however, the two works had failed to establish themselves in the repertory. The second competition was clearly intended to produce a better result.

Sonzogno's competitions reflected a pragmatic attitude towards the challenges of the Italian operatic industry. Since 1874, Sonzogno had been responsible for introducing many of the new French works into Italian theatres, including operas by Bizet, Thomas, Gounod and Massenet. At the same time, Sonzogno had capitalised on the reduced costs of printing to publish cheap piano reductions of popular works by composers such as Rossini and Bellini. These moves clearly plugged a gap in the musical market, introducing audiences to foreign works and making repertory items further available to an emerging middle class. Yet Sonzogno's efforts had created an unprecedently difficult environment in which new Italian composers could make their mark. Organising a competition served to lure new figures into

[14] See for example Matteo Sansone, "Verga and Mascagni: The critics' response to *Cavalleria Rusticana*" in *Music and Letters* 71/2 (1990), 198-214; Alan Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and His Operas* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002); and Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera: From Verismo to Modernism, 1890-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007).

[15] On the Sonzogno publishing firm, see Marco Capra, "La Casa Editrice Sonzogno tra giornalismo e impresario", in *Casa musicale Sonzogno: Cronologie, saggi, testimonianze*, ed. Mario Morini and Nandi Ostali (Milan: Sonzogno, 1995), 243–90; and Silvia Valisa, "Casa editrice Sonzogno. Mediazione culturale, circuiti del sapere ed innovazione tecnologica nell'Italia unificata (1861–1900)", in *The Printed Media in Fin-de-siècle Italy: Publishers, Writers, and Readers*, ed. Ann Hallamore Caesar, Gabriella Romani & Jennifer Burns (Cambridge: Legenda, 2011), 90-106; see also Bianca Maria Antolini, "Sonzogno", Grove Music Online, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26237?q=sonzogno&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, accessed 21 August 2017.

[16] "[D]i soggetto *idilliaco*, *serio* o *giocoso* […] La musica dei lavori aspirante ai premi dovrà essere inspirata alle tradizione italiana, ma senza rinunciare agli splendidi portati della scienza dei suoni contemporanea"; in "Incorragiamento ai giovani compositori italiani", *Il teatro illustrato*, 1 July 1888, 98.

the Sonzogno stable, while enabling Italian composers to formulate a contemporary model of *italianità* on a manageable scale: one that offered an obvious contrast to the Wagnerian repertoire increasingly popular in Italian theatres.[17]

In such a context, the rapturous public reception accorded to *Cavalleria rusticana* seems to have reflected a sense that Mascagni had modernised, yet remained irreducibly Italian, however imprecisely defined such ideas often were. Notwithstanding the cosmopolitan character of the jury, immediate critical reaction to *Cavalleria* was largely marked by a sense of the opera's resistance to foreign conventions: a belief that Mascagni had learnt the lessons of "modern" orchestration but had absorbed them into an enduringly Italian focus on lyricism. Writing in *Fanfulla*, Roman journalist Eugenio Checchi thus asserted that Mascagni had "fulfilled the great Verdi's wish to return to the past, but a return filtered through new demands, new needs, the revitalised aspirations of art."[18] Checchi's observation appears to collapse stylistic evolution (above all an awareness of Wagnerian ambitions) with new attitudes regarding art's social role, in which the language of idealism hovers close to the surface. Similar observations about the opera's delicate balance between tradition and innovation recurred in many early reviews: jury member Francesco D'Arcais explicitly praised *Cavalleria* for its appeal to the national character, while suggesting that Mascagni's provincial upbringing had probably shielded him from the misguided internationalism of his peers. "[The public] is thirsty for novelty, but it wants it to appear in the enlightened look of the beautiful sun of Italy and not surrounded by the mists of the North […] If Mascagni remained in Milan, perhaps the example of others would have led him to committing mistakes common to young music composers."[19] A product of the provinces (notwithstanding his Milanese education), Mascagni had found a subject matter and musical

[17] The first Italian *Ring* cycle was performed at La Fenice in 1883. The composers and critics chosen to adjudicate the Sonzogno competition – Filippo Marchetti, Pietro Platania, Giovanni Sgambati, Amintore Galli, alongside Francesco D'Arcais – were representative of Italy's musical trends in recent decades: Filippo Marchetti's opera *Ruy Blas* (1869) had been an early example of a work marked by grand opera; Giovanni Sgambati had conducted the first Italian performances of several of Beethoven's symphonies and was a close acquaintance of Franz Liszt; while Pietro Platania had produced a movement for the abandoned *Messa per Rossini*. The jury moreover offered a cross-section of Italy's different regions: the Sicilian-born Platania had since 1885 been the director of the Naples Conservatory; Amintore Galli was a professor at the Milan conservatory and Italy's leading expert on Wagner; while Sgambati, Marchetti and Francesco D'Arcais were all based in Rome.

[18] Cited in Edoardo Pompei, *Pietro Mascagni nella vita e nell'arte* (Rome: Tipografia Editrice Nazionale, 1912), 83; reprinted in Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and His Operas*, 60.

[19] "Ha sete di novità, ma vuole che queste gli si presentino allo sguardo illuminato del bel sole d'Italia e non circondate dale nebbie del Nord […] Se il Mascagni fosse rimasto a Milano, forse l'esempio di altri lo avrebbe portato a commettere gli errori comuni ai giovani compositori di musica." Francesco D'Arcais, "La musica italiana e la Cavalleria rusticana del M. Mascagni", *Nuova antologia*, June 1890; reprinted in *Cavalleria rusticana 1890-1990; Cento anni di capolavoro*, ed. P. Ostali (Milan: Sonzogno, 1990), 131-2.

style that enabled him to retain a timeless *italianità* now seemingly under threat from urban cosmopolitanism.

Nearly sixty at the time of *Cavalleria*'s premiere in 1890, D'Arcais undoubtedly represented the more conservative end of the Italian critical spectrum. As numerous scholars have shown, however, the years preceding the opera's premiere had been marked by widespread concerns surrounding the formulation of a distinctly Italian musical modernity, echoing broader anxieties about the nation's political project.[20] Digging a little further beneath the critical hyperbole, a less steady historical account of Mascagni's achievement begins to emerge. If *Cavalleria* augured well for the nation's musical future, such an event was hardly new. The sharply declining success rate of new operas in the last three decades had led to a succession of new composers being anointed the nation's new musical hope, only for later masterpieces to fail to materialise – juror Filippo Marchetti's works among them. A number of publications circulated claims that Verdi had read through the score in Mascagni's company and declared "Oro posso morire contento" ("now I can die happy"); dubious accounts seeking to add authority to the audience's cry of "we have a maestro!".[21] *Cavalleria*'s brevity was both an invitation to speculate on future works, and an obstacle to Mascagni's immediate admittance into the operatic pantheon. Numerous critics sought to balance their awareness of Mascagni's compositional inexperience – and the traces it apparently left on the finished score – with the anticipatory tone of their responses. Writing in the Milanese journal the *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, one anonymous reviewer commented that "[the] music of this score, which is the second among those chosen in the Sonzogno Competition, has the rare element of inspiration; and if it does not always ooze originality, it nonetheless remains in the happy realm of melody, which is often lively and dramatic […] the audience has opened without reserve their soul to the youngest maestro, who, despite his natural inexperience, as I have told you, already seems to be somebody and to possess a true vocation on the lyrical stage."[22] The *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* similarly reported that "all

[20] See Carlo Piccardi, "Ossessione dell'italianità: il primate perduto tra nostalgia classicistica e riscatto nazionale", in *Atti del 3 Convengo Internazionale "Ruggero Leoncavallo nel suo tempo": Nazionalismo e Cosmopolitismo nell'opera fra '800 e '900*, ed. Lorenza Guiot & Jürgen Maehder (Milan: Casa Musicale Sonzogno, 1998), 25-57; Emanuele Senici, "Verdi's 'Falstaff' at Italy's Fin de Siècle", *The Musical Quarterly* 85/2 (2001), 274-310; and Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[21] "Corriere Artistico", *Corriere della sera*, 5-6 June 1890, 3; reprinted from the Roman publication *Epoca*.

[22] "La musica di questo spartito, che è il secondo fra quelli scelti nel Concorso Sonzogno, ha l'oggimai raro pregio dell'inspirazione; e se non sempre vi scaturisce l'originalità, si mantiene nullameno nel grato campo della melodia, che è spesso viva e drammatica. La instrumentazione è piana e non schiaccia il canto con sonorità clamoroso: anzi, le voci possono muoversi nel loro registro naturale, e si alzano come in rilievo sull'insieme orchestrale, con limpida chiarezza […] il pubblico ha aperto senza parsimonia l'animo suo verso il giovanissimo

the newspapers, with rare unanimity, speak of him as a master destined for a great and sure future […] Such a success can't be recalled for several years – speaking of him as a newcomer – and it is therefore spontaneous and legitimate": a judgement which again underlined the remarkable acclaim heaped upon Mascagni, but also his evident youth.[23]

While such accounts appeared to promise a uniform response across the Italian peninsula, reactions to the opera proved decidedly more mixed once it began to circulate throughout Italy and neighbouring territories. This diversity complicated claims about the opera's indisputable *italianità*, instead highlighting the persistence of regional identities within the new nation state.[24] *Il teatro illustrato* unsurprisingly chronicled the transfer of the opera after its Roman premiere, and early performances in Florence, Bologna and Livorno were all enthusiastically received. Upon its eventual arrival at La Scala in early January 1891, however, local critics quickly began to adopt a more cautious tone.[25] For many writers, the opera's international celebrity offered a bulwark against foreign claims of Italy's operatic decline – in the words of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, sending pompous French reviewers into convulsions of envy.[26] Yet the high hopes pinned on the work also risked overstating the scale of Mascagni's achievement. *Corriere della sera* interpreted the enthusiasm of some audience members as the inappropriate interference of a number of claques; while the *Rivista teatrale melodrammatica* argued that *Cavalleria* had been a success without proving a "total sensation", and that soothsaying about the operatic future

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maestro: il quale, ve l'ho detto, malgrado le naturale inesperienza, mostra già d'essere qualcheduno e di possedere una vocazione vera della scena lirica […] Sotto il gran sole della melodia, è dunque iersera spuntata una notevole opera d'arte, nella quale, grazie a Dio, l'inspirazione circola liberamente, e il pensiero musicale non esce dal caos." *Gazzetta teatrale italiana,* 23 May 1890.

[23] "[A] quest'ora sarà giunta a Milano l'eco degli applause entusiastici coi quali fu salutata la Cavalleria rusticana del maestro Mascagni […] Iersera, alla seconda representazione, essendosi sparse le notizie del successo veramente trionfale, il Costanzi era addirituria gremito, rigurgitante, e molte persone non avendo trovato posto, ritornarono indietro […] tutti i giornali, con rara uninamità, parlano di lui come di un maestro destinato ad un grande e sicure avvenire […] Il successo, quale non si ricorda l'uguale (trattandosi di un esordiente) da parecchi anni, è dunque stato spontaneo e legitimo." *Gazzetta musicale di Milano,* 25 May 1890.

[24] Matteo Sansone highlights the importance of regionalism in the early reception of Umberto Giordani's *Mala Vita* (1892): "Giordano's 'Mala Vita': A 'Verismo' opera too good to be true", *Music and Letters* 75/3 (1994), 381–400. Laura Basini reaches similar conclusions in her study of *Pagliacci*'s regional markings: "Masks, Minuets and Murder: Images of Italy in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 133/1 (2008), 32-68.

[25] The opera received 23 performances, with Romilda Pantaleoni singing Santuzza and a rotating trio of tenors as Turiddu. As Alan Mallach notes, Sonzogno had leased La Scala for the 1891 season (as he would do again in 1895 and 1896) enabling him to present a greater number of his own composers. See *The Autumn of Italian Opera*, 214-5.

[26] On foreign sniping at Italy's decline, see for example the article entitled "Quei cari cugini!", in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano,* 10 August 1890, 506, mocking the French for saying Italian opera is decadent and in decline: the arrival of Mascagni has terrified them – "La semplice apparizione del nome di Mascagni sul firmamento dell'arte italiana ha messo in convulsione il sacchetto bilioso dei nostri buoni vicini".

was ultimately damaging audiences' capacity to enjoy new works: "It's right to say in this case: death to astrology!"[27] As reviews rolled in during the following weeks, the sense that the La Scala premiere had been a moderate but not extraordinary success hardened. For *Il mondo artistico*, initial enthusiasm for the opera could not realistically be sustained; and as in any first work, the levels of originality were not exceptional.[28] The *Gazzetta teatrale italiana* was more encouraging in its assessment of recent Northern Italian performances, but also acknowledged that the work was best enjoyed away from the heavy prognostications that typically accompanied new works: "*Cavalleria rusticana* is a broad and solemn promise, trustworthy in spite of the unpredictable conditions of the future which were assigned to it."[29]

The discrepancies between the work's initial reception and the more muted Milanese response doubtless had several causes. After the initial excitement, more reasoned responses came into play; and by 1891, a sizeable proportion of the audience were already familiar with numbers from the opera, not least from visits to other theatres in Italy to hear the work. Irritation at Sonzogno's promotional strategies may also have been a factor, especially in Ricordi's *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*. Yet the music's comparative simplicity, and the opera's exoticised Southern setting also appeared to play a role: not least in the sense of *Cavalleria*'s lack of originality. The Sonzogno firm had in recent decades been a prominent producer of images of the Italian South, fuelling a fascination with the region since the articulation of the "Southern Question" in the 1870s.[30] The *mezzogiorno* had already been a subject of interest for the literate classes during the Risorgimento period, with the Milanese

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[27] "Fra dimenstrazioni d'entusiasmo troppo clamorosamente accentuate per sembrare perfettamente legittame ed opposizioni troppo malevole per non essere di progetto […] quell'orgasmo di pubblico in cui pur troppo entrano tanti ingredienti estranei all'arte…simpatie od antipatie editoriali, influenzi di artisti e persino considerazioni politiche!" "Corriere Teatrale", *Corriere della sera*, 4-5 January 1891.
"[Ho] udito Cavalleria Rusticana e no ho provata una vivissima sensazione[…] Il successo della fortunata opera di Mascagni fu qui a Milano se non entusiastico quanto a Roma, a Firenze o a Livorno, certamente buonissimo, tanto più se si considerano la avversioni sistematiche de taluni che usando della loro influenza non hanno trascurato alcun mezzo di nuocere al giovano compositore […] È proprio il caso di dire: crepi l'astrologo!" "Teatri Locali", *Rivista teatrale melodrammatica*, 8 January 1891.

[28] "Appunto per il cammino già percorso dall'opera non poteva aspettarsi un continuato entusiasmo; ma entusiasmo ci fu in più punti […] si può riconescere che l'originalità non vi eccelle, come, del resto, in nessun primo lavoro […] ma resta un lavoro bello, potente per un giovane maestro". "Teatro Alla Scala", *Il mondo artistico*, 10 January 1891, 3.

[29] "*Cavalleria rusticana* è una larga e solenne promessa, tanto più attendibile quanto che fatta in condizioni imprevedibili dell'avvenire che le era assegnato." "Da Parma", *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, February 1891, 22.

[30] On the history of the "Southern Question", see Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jane Schneider, ed., *Italy's "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country* (New York: Berg, 1998); Robert Lumley & Jonathan Morris, eds., *The New History of the Italian South: The Mezzogiorno Revisited* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997); John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); and Silvana Patriarca & Lucy Riall, eds., *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

magazine *Cosmorama pittorico* publishing explorations of the region that depicted it as both economically backward yet attractively picturesque.[31] After unification interest rapidly increased, with debates by Pasquale Villari and Leopoldo Franchetti – the creators of so-called *meridionalismo* – supplemented by depictions of the area in Milanese magazine *L'illustrazione italiana* appealing to the newly literate classes. Sonzogno's journal *Emporio pittoresco* had been one of the first post-unification publications to explore images of the South; and in so doing, Sonzogno had capitalised on the complex position occupied by the South in the northern Italian imagination; indeed he helped to shape it. As John Dickie argues, the South in such images was by turns "picturesquely Italian and the grotesquely Oriental"; it functioned as an internal Other, aiding in the production of a literate, middle-class identity by presenting "that which lay beyond the boundaries of the nation – what the magazine called its 'elegant and cultivated public' – yet within the confines of the nation-state".[32]

If the South could serve as a potentially threatening (yet titillating) form of local exoticism, politicians exploring the "Southern Question" had also edged towards a more romanticised, patriotic image of the region: one in which it was imagined as the quintessence of the nation. While brigandry had been a pressing issue for Northern politicians, and Verga's story offered an idealised take on Southern crime, the South's perceived rawness was also a symbol of Italy's own potential; in Dickie's words, the South was "both an Other and the raw stuff of the nation, the promise of the country's rise to the uplands of civilisation […] Italy is to constitute its identity by finding in the South both its Other and its most intimate self; its greatest 'moral danger' and its ultimate salvation".[33] As Silvana Patriarca and Roberto Dainotto have elsewhere explored, these negative views were complicated by longstanding perceptions of Italy itself as the South within Europe – problematically backward yet also the cradle of civilisation.[34] Investigations of the South could offer a homespun form of orientalism, or instead an investigation into the nation's very soul: the South therefore serving equally as exoticised Other or a paradigm of *italianità*.

[31] See Moe, *The View from Vesuvius,* 85-125.
[32] John Dickie, "Stereotypes of the Italian South 1860-1900", in *The New History of the Italian South,* 114-47; especially 133-7.
[33] Ibid., 129
[34] See Patriarca & Riall, *The Risorgimento Revisited*, 4; and Roberto Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

Against that background, the fact that Mascagni's work staged the Italian South was surely a significant factor in both its early celebrity and (I would suggest) its more mixed Milanese reception.[35] While the opera offered a picturesque vision of Sicily and a simplified musical language – a tale already popular in printed and spoken theatrical form – such moves also disappointed some audience members, for whom these depictions were both over-familiar and potentially alien: appealing, yet at odds with Milan's self-image as the nation's cosmopolitan capital, and less easily palatable in operatic form. *Cavalleria* did not return to La Scala until 1907, paired with Cilea's *Gloria* (1907). By 1891, however, the Southern Question was investigated not solely as a matter of domestic policy, but also in relation to emigration.[36] Parliamentary committees had first discussed the emigration in 1888 and revealed sharply divided responses. While some officials speculated on the possibility of halting the free flow of emigrants, others contemplated the government buying land abroad to maintain official protection over Italian citizens. In 1871, Italian citizens abroad had already been recorded in an official census, and by 1901 such a document would become a nine-volume work entitled *Emigrazione e colonie*. Unable to halt the flow of emigrants travelling from Italy, prime minister Francesco Crispi instead proposed in December 1887 that emigration could be reimagined as a form of national expansion: "Colonies must be like arms, which the country extends far away in foreign districts to bring them within the orbit of its relations of labour and exchange; they must be like an enlargement of the boundaries of its action and its economic power."[37] As Mark Choate has shown, the humiliating defeat of Italian military forces at the battle of Adwa in 1896 would lead to renewed calls to exploit emigration, and for failed colonial efforts to be rejected in favour of developing a "new Italy'" (in politician Attilio Brunialti's words) across the Atlantic.[38] Rhetorical assertions were supported by a complex system of societies, banks, churches, schools and publications that sought to sustain links between Italy and its emigrant populations.[39] Emigration may have threatened Italy's reputation abroad, and drew into question the success of the unification project; but mass exodus might with careful handling secure the nation's

[35] Basini, "Masks, Minuets and Murder" examines *Pagliacci*'s dramaturgy in relation to Northern Italian images of the South.
[36] See Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 21-56; and Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*, 31-5.
[37] Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Leg. XVI, 2a sessione 1887, Documenti n.85 15 December 1887, 9; cited in Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 29.
[38] Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 21-56.
[39] Ibid., 72-147. On the internal politics and mechanics of Italian emigration, see also Piero Bevilacqua, Adreina De Clementi & Emilio Franzini, eds., *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana* (Rome: Donzelli, 2002)

economic and social future.[40] The result, as Donna R. Gabaccia summarises, was that "while the rulers of newly independent Italy struggled to build a national economy and to make Italians, Italy exported people more successfully than any other product."[41]

Emigration was from all parts of Italy, and the Milanese borders were certainly not immune. But from the early 1890s the proportion of emigrants from the South rose sharply, as did the numbers moving to America: between 1876-1880 an average of 109,000 Italians had emigrated per year, but by 1891 the number had risen to 256,500; and around 90% of emigrants from the South travelled to the Americas. As the decade wore on, the numbers from the North choosing destinations in Europe would significantly increase: by 1901-1905, only 21% of North Italians travelled to America, while 88% of Southerners still chose to cross the Atlantic.[42] In such a context, it was perhaps unsurprising that *Cavalleria* should have been accorded a less warm reception in Milan than elsewhere in Italy – representing as it did a version of the nation that was by then highly familiar and politically problematic; both reassuringly exotic and yet potentially too close to home to function as appropriate operatic entertainment. Yet for some critics the quick circulation of the piece at least offered a more promising vision of Italy's future – one that gestured towards a further commercial exploitation of the South. These issues would only become more present once the opera crossed the Atlantic.

Operatic Migrations: Mascagni

The arrival of *Cavalleria* in Buenos Aires in late February 1891 came mired in controversy. Mascagni's opera had already been presented in a number of European capitals, and the Argentine performances constituted its first appearance outside Europe. As with the recent premiere of *Otello*, however, the production offered by Cesare Ciacchi's troupe at the Teatro Nacional presented a pirated version of the score, re-orchestrated by an unknown hand and

[40] In 1883, the network of Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad had been established to coordinate human emigration with commercial exports (and to avoid cheap substitutes for entering foreign markets); a program of Italian schools abroad founded in 1862 was expanded by Crispi in 1889.
[41] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 60.
[42] Statistics drawn from Baily, 27; taken in turn from the *Annuario statistico*, 8-11. Immigration to Argentina had already exceeded 150,000 in the period 1871-1880, while numbers travelling to the USA in the same decade were around 55,000. By 1891, however, an 493,885 had travelled to Argentina in the previous decade; 307,309 had crossed the Atlantic to the USA in the same period.

presented with limited rehearsal time and restricted orchestral resources.[43] Critics were quick to express disappointment that a celebrated work should again receive its local premiere in murky circumstances, and were hesitant in offering opinions on the work (particularly given the poor quality of the performances).[44] The opera's return as part of 1891 winter season at the Ópera brought issues of musical quality explicitly to the fore, as well as the international context in which it was composed and received. Conducted by Muraro Mancinelli, the production premiered in early August to a packed theatre.[45] The opera's enthusiastic European reception provided a predictable framework for Argentine critics, and numerous authors leant on Italian authorities to bolster their initial responses. D'Arcais's glowing comments provided a model for the critic of *Sud-América*, for example, for whom D'Arcais's final words had proved to be "the word of destiny". Even more importantly, the enthusiastic response of Argentine audiences would verify D'Arcais's judgement, with the echo of applause in the Río de la Plata resonating back in Italy to assert Mascagni's place in the operatic firmament.[46]

Elsewhere, commentators in both the Spanish- and Italian-language press underlined the distinctively Italian quality of Mascagni's writing, and the fundamental continuities between *Cavalleria* and earlier operatic tradition: the sense that the opera contained "all the fire of imagination that characterises Southern Italy" (in the words of *El Nacional*), and that "*Cavalleria* should be admired as the expression of the powerful and truly Italian genius."[47] The presence of both Argentine President Pellegrini and Italian minister Duca di Licignano underlined the occasion's national-cum-diasporic significance: Pellegrini's Swiss-Italian heritage promised a swift nationalisation of the new Italian work, with *Cavalleria* destined to

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[43] *Sud-América* reported on the day of the premiere, 28 February 1891, that a performance of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamonix* had been cancelled in order to allow for a rehearsal, and that the impresario had assured audiences that the only change had been the necessity of halving the number of orchestral musicians. Turridu was performed by tenor Annovazzi; the Santuzza was Snr Fracchia, the baritone "Sr. Poggi". Anibal Cetrangolo speculates that Juan Bernardi may have been responsible for the orchestration: see *Opera, Barcos y Banderas*, 169-70.

[44] "La *première* de la triunfante ópera del maestro Mascagni, que tuvo lugar el sábado en el teatro Nacional, ha puesto á la empresa, al público y á la prensa en la mas original de las situaciones, condensada en esta frase: es ó no es autentica la partitura?" "Vida Teatral", *El Diario*, 1-2 March 1891, 2. The critic for *El Nacional* echoed such complaints on 2 March 1891, 1, in the article "El Estreno de la 'Cavalleria Rusticana'", where he proposed that the orchestration was "fake", and this is vital in "modern music".

[45] According to surviving press reports, Saffo Bellincioni performed the part of Lola; Turiddu was performed by Mariacher, Santuzza by Adalgisa Gabbi.

[46] "[Será] como el grito vigoroso de aliento que la República argentina, en nombre de la América todo, envia al través de los mares, al audaz compositor Pietro Mascagni". "Noches de la Opera: 'Cavalleria Rusticana'", *Sud-América*, 10 August 1891, 1.

[47] "[Todo] el fuego de imaginacíon que caracteriza la Italia Meridional". "Teatro de la Opera", *El Nacional*, 6 August 1891, 1; "la *Cavalleria* deve ammirarai come la manifestazione di un potente ingenio veramente italiano." "La 'Cavalleria Rusticana' al Teatro dell'Opera", *La patria italiana*, 6 August 1891, 1.

enter the standard operatic repertory.[48] As with *Otello*, the sheer weight of critical commentary preceding the opera nonetheless proved challenging for certain critics longing for apparently simpler times: challenges here especially pronounced in relation to the opera's musical style. Declarations of the opera's indisputable *italianità* clashed with perceptions of the work's cosmopolitanism; and the internationalised discourse of musical criticism became entangled with a worryingly chaotic modern musical culture, as flattering statements about Mascagni's modernising strategies were contrasted with ones eager to preserve imagined boundaries.[49] An extensive review by Enrique Frexas in *La Nación* expressed such concerns particularly forcefully:

> The history of lyric-dramatic art will record many works superior to *Cavalleria rusticana*; but very few quite so lucky, not just for its success, but for the interest and clamour that it has provoked. Behold how Mascagni's work has been written about and discussed! It's already well known, on account of all the newspapers similar to ours: the lack of productions, the superabundance of criticism, the wasteful excess of commentary [...] Confronted by that extraodinary mixture of wise judgments that has crossed in all directions and senses, producing in the atmosphere something akin to the distant glimmer of a remote storm. Some of them are raising the work to the heavens, – others are throwing it down to the ground; some classify the opera as an obviously great achievement; others dismiss it simply as a publishing success, created by a Barnum of publishers; and there are those, finally, who are putting things "in their proper place", and rating them at the same time – this is historic – as mediocre, notable, bad, inspired, eclectic, radical, old and entirely new![50]

The problem for Frexas, it would seem, is the lack of fixed principles, and the excess of different musical materials. In the modern age, everything is in flux and art no longer has fixed qualities: "Confusion is already entering; as for the art of the future…will it be

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[48] *Cavalleria*'s pairing with the first act of *La sonnambula* also hinted at broader continuities, with both works playing out a pastoral fantasy of thwarted romantic love.

[49] "[Como] lo fué Wagner, como lo es Boito"; "Cavalleria Rusticana", *El Censor*, 6 August 1891, 2.

[50] "La historia del arte lírico-dramático registrará muchas obras superiores á la *Cavalleria Rusticana*; pero poquísimas tan afortunadas, donde no por el éxito, por el interés y clamoreo que ha promovido. ¡Cuidado si se ha escrito y debatido sobre la operita de Mascagni! Ya se sabe, porque as achaque de todos los periodicos similaries al nuestro: á escasez de produccion, superabundancia de crítica, derroche de comentario […] A la vista de esa multiplicidad portentosa de juicios sapientísimos que se han cruzado en todas direcciones y sentidos produciendo en la atmósfera como el lejano centelleo de una remota tempestad; los unos elevando a las nubes la obra, - los otros deprimiéndola hasta los suelos; quiénes calificándola de un prodigio evidentemente genial, quiénes de un éxito exclusivamente editorial elaborado per un Barnum de la editacion que se pinta solo para el caso; y quienes, por último, para poner las cosas en su punto, calificándola a la vez – esto es histórico – de mediana, notable, mala, inspirada, ecléctica, radical, antiquada y novísima!" "Revista Musical", *La Nación*, 9 August 1891, 2.

chaos?"[51] While some critics claimed that Mascagni had maintained his "national temperament", for Frexas this was only partly true; Mascagni had kept hold of older forms, "as Italian authors have always done", Frexas argued, "but here ends his italianità of the old school". If Mascagni belonged to any school, Frexas concluded, it was in fact the modern French one, "and if he isn't the successor to Verdi, he could be the Italian Bizet".[52]

Frexas's lament was part of a broader campaign on his part against musical cosmopolitanism – an effort to forge clear links between "nation and art", that would enable a clearer musical style to be maintained.[53] A review of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamonix* published shortly before the performances of *Cavalleria* at the Ópera thus rhapsodised over "its clarity, its freshness, and its simplicity" in contrast to the "one thousand accessories" and "transcendental conceptions" considered necessary for modern music to succeed.[54] The 1890 season at the Ópera offered a clear example of such operatic diversity: alongside Italian staples such as *Rigoletto, Aida, La forza del destino, La Gioconda, Mefistofele* and *Linda* were presented *La favorite, Les Huguenots* and *L'Africaine*, as well as performances of *Lohengrin*.[55] Frexas's complaint therefore chimed with broader international discourses of cultural decadence – immortalised as "degeneration" by Max Nordau a year later – while favouring the melodic clarity of earlier Italian opera. Questions about *Cavalleria*'s *italianità* were ultimately not a local preoccupation, but rather indicative of a contemporary musical environment characterised by over-saturation; and in which the relative merits of works and musical styles needed to be carefully categorised – even "disciplined".[56]

The opera's North American premiere in Philadelphia a month later provoked similar questions; but the production's more modest arrangement ensured that the event was also

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[51] "La confusion y ava entrando; en cuanto al arte de porvenir…¿será el caos?" Ibid.
[52] "como han hecho siempre los autores italianos […] pero aquí concluyo su italianismo á la Antigua […] y si no el successor de Verdi, puede ser en Italia el de Bizet". Ibid.
[53] See "Patria y Arte", *La Nación*, 2 November 1891 (especially the comments on how popular song has managed to resist cosmopolitanism).
[54] "¡Ah, Donizetti! ¡Cuanta falta nos estás hacienda hoy dia con tu talento prodigioso, tu inspiracion facilisima y tu sentido artístico sano y seguro! Hoy, con mucha más *ciencia* que lo que tu tenias, con mucha filosofia y mucha critica, no se sabe hacer una pobre *Linda* come la que tú escribiste en mucho menos tiempo del que ahora se necesita solo para ensayar cualquiera de las concepciones *trascendentales* que están en moda, y de las que salimos con la abeza atrenada y el corazon helado." "Teatro de la Opera", *La Nación,* 24 July 1891.
[55] *Lohengrin* had first been presented in 1883, the first of the Wagner operas presented in the city; it was followed by *Der Fliegende Höllande*r in 1887, with *Tannhäuser* first presented in 1894. For an overview of Wagnerian performance in Buenos Aires, see Ronald H. Dolkart, "The Bayreuth of South America: Wagnerian Opera in Buenos Aires", *The Opera Quarterly* 1/3 (1983), 84–100. As outlined in the introduction, programmes and other documentation from the Teatro de la Ópera (and other theatres in Buenos Aires) have largely been lost, and seasons can only be reconstructed through surviving newspapers.
[56] The impact of such distinctions on music historiography are examined in Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, eds, *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

painted as of interest primarily to aficionados: the "italianissimi" who read *Il trovatore* magazine to keep up on the latest Italian operatic developments, in the words of *The New York Times*.[57] Organised by impresario Gustave Hinrichs, the Italian-language performances in Philadelphia provoked predictable comparisons with Verdi and Gounod, as well as more obscure associations with Kipling that underlined the opera's exotic appeal for New York critics alongside its pithiness.[58] The race to stage the opera in New York in fact resulted in two English-language productions opening on the same day. The afternoon performance at the Casino theatre (conducted by Rudolph Aronson) was succeeded by Anton Seidl's evening show at the Lyceum (then under the management of Oscar Hammerstein).[59] Familiar stereotypes of Italian simplicity and dishonesty reared their head: "[the] opera is as full of tricks as the monkey on an Italian organ", commented one reviewer; "by his mingled skill and audacity, Mascagni elevates a commonplace village quarrel into a tragedy as worthy of grand musical treatment as the wars in the Walhalla".[60] References to Wagner underlined a familiar, universalist idea of operatic modernity, while highlighting the endurance of old Italian stereotypes within a changing aesthetic framework. In New York, the Italian-language press likewise covered the arrival of the two operas enthusiastically. In its report on *Cavalleria*, *L'eco d'Italia* – a newspaper founded by Italian political exiles during the 1840s – admired the excellent imitation of a Sicilian village offered at the Lenox Lyceum, with wonky houses and orange trees under a radiant sky; and it offered extensive coverage of both productions to counteract periodic negative press of Italian émigrés – verismo functioning here not as negative publicity but instead an opportunity for social uplift.[61] The newspaper even printed a report by US critic William Moor to support its positive judgements, and expressed mild frustration that more Italian citizens had not sought the opportunity to

[57] "Pietro Mascagni's Opera", *The New York Times*, 10 September 1891, 5.
[58] Ibid. For an overview of Hinrich's activities and his relationship with Oscar Hammerstein, see June C. Ottenberg, "Gustave Hinrichs and Opera in Philadelphia, 1888-1896", *The Opera Quarterly* 15/2 (1999), 196–223.
[59] "Our Theatrical Playground", *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Recreation*, November 1891, 16. The race prompted a legal battle that was also covered in the Italian-language newspapers. The Casino production would go on to pair *Cavalleria* with Carl Zeller's comic opera *Der Vogelhändler* (presented as *The Tyrolean*), with admission starting at 50 cents.
[60] *The New York Spirit of the Times*, 10 October 1891. Approving comments on "Wagnerisation" were a staple of Verdi's German reception during the 1880s and 1890s: see Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans: From Unification to the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 116-32.
[61] "La 'Cavalleria Rusticana' a New York", *L'eco d'Italia*, 2 October 1891, 1.

celebrate the musical occasion.[62] *Il progresso italo-americano* went even further in its praise, describing the opera as:

> that stupendous and pure conception of a true art, of a living art, of a modern art – in which the hot blood of Southern passion flows in torrents, and human passion beats to its full extent – that brief and pressing drama of the exquisite union of word and note, which surprises, abducts, drags, envelops spectators and actors alike in a modest, ineffable, irresistible enchantment – it seemed to be a masterpiece.[63]

Sicilian passion is here not simply staged but theatrically and violently enacted upon those in the theatre: operatic realism taken to extremes, even in English. The performances at the Met shortly afterwards seemed to reinforce this positive impression. Paired with *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the opera attracted a sizeable audience and appeared to cement the return of Italian opera to the house, in spite of earlier complaints by pro-German audience members.[64] Indeed, while Mascagni's work was concerned with "the elementary truths of human nature", the opera offered a substantially more sophisticated approach than audiences familiar with Verga's work might have expected; as one contemporary literary review reminded readers, the South of Italy had "less culture and refinement, more of strong primitive human nature than in the north of Italy – the natures are more passionate and there is less self-control".[65] Mascagni's opera thus offered an unexpectedly elevated version of the South, transposing the elemental passions of Italian opera into a Wagnerian register, and uplifting a "realist" work by operatic means.

Overall, the respective local premieres of *Cavalleria* in Buenos Aires and New York offered a less straightforwardly nationalistic perspective on the work than within parts of Italy, emphasising its intermingling of musical styles as well as its cultural continuity. The opera's staggered trajectory across the Atlantic and between the cities also highlighted the one-act opera's awkward position within the operatic repertory, and its rather uncomfortable relationship with "grand opera" presentation. While Argentine critics expressed dismay at its

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[62] "Costretti sempre a registrar i soprusi, i cattivi guidizi, il disprezzo di certa classe di americani, noi avremmo volute che tutta la colonia avesse assistito al trionfo inarrivabile dell'arte italiana". "Gloria Italiana: ancora della 'Cavalleria Rusticana'", *L'eco d'Italia*, 3 October 1891, 1.
[63] "[Quella] stupenda e pura concezione di un'arte vera, di un'arte viva, di un'arte moderna – in cui fluisce a fiotti il sangue caldo della passione meridionale e palpita la passione umana nella sua gamma completa – quel dramma breve e incalzantesi nello squisito armonizzare della parola e della nota, che sorprende, rapisce, trascina, avvolge spettatori e attori in un modesino, ineffabile, irresistibile incantamente – parve ciò che è un capolavoro". "La "Cavalleria Rusticana" in New York", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 3 October 1891, 1.
[64] See "Amusements: Metropolitan Opera House", *The New York Times*, 12 March 1892.
[65] Mary Hargrave, "The Author of Cavalleria Rusticana", *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, February 1893, 223.

shabby initial presentation, by the following season the work had soon migrated to less socially elite theatres within the city; and various transcriptions of the opera had already begun to circulate by its local premiere. On 2 August 1892, *El Diario* could record that the opera had just been performed at the Teatro Nacional by the Alberto Bernia company – the first of twenty performances seeking to lure audiences over from the recently finished season at the Ópera – while a performance also took place at the small San Martín theatre.[66] Versions of the opera's *Intermezzo* were soon adapted into Ave Marias for church use, a practice common in the earlier nineteenth-century century but increasingly supplanted by specially-composed works.[67] In New York, competing English-language versions at the Casino and Lyceum theatres also offered a significantly less socially elite setting than the later Met performances. Any potentially awkward problems surrounding the opera's brevity and informal presentation were offset, however, by the opportunity to encounter a new and highly-lauded Italian work: an event of noticeable rarity, but that *Cavalleria*'s success promised might soon change.

Operatic Migrations: Leoncavallo

The premiere of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan in May 1892 seemed to bolster such hopes for American critics. Conducted by Arturo Toscanini and featuring Victor Maurel as Tonio, public reaction in Milan was generally positive; but earlier concerns about *Cavalleria*'s lack of originality emerged with fuller force. "Summing up our impressions", argued the *Corriere della sera*, "it seems that maestro Leoncavallo, although possessing a series of musicianly qualities and an unusual musical culture, tried to achieve in this *Pagliacci*, not an original and genuinely-felt work in which to display an artistic personality, but instead a work that, playing with old shapes, and with fluent and well-known melodies, pleases the taste of the masses, and gave immediate success, however fleeting".[68] The opera's self-conscious rehashing of older tradition hampered *Pagliacci* from possessing "la modernità" – a quality apparently irreconcilable with popular appeal. "It is certainly not

[66] "Teatros", *El Diario*, 2 August 1892, 3. *La Nación* noted on 29 July 1892 (in the review "Teatro Nacional") that the opening night show of *Cavalleria* would be paired with the third act of *La Gioconda*.
[67] Alan Mallach draws attention to similar practices in Italy – see *The Autumn of Italian Opera*, 179. Argentine reviews typically refer to the intermezzo as a "preghiera".
[68] "Riassumendo le nostre impressione ci sembra che il maestro Leoncavallo, pure possedendo delle serie qualità di musicista e una cultura musicale non comune, abbia cercate di fare in questi *Pagliacci*, non un lavoro sentito ed originale in cui trionfasse una personalità artistica, ma un'opera che, solleticando colle vecchie forme, e colle melodie fluente e conosciute, il gusto delle masse, desse il successo immediato, per quanto effimero." "Corriere Teatrale", *Corriere della sera*, 22-23 May 1892.

an opera inspired at a high level of art", confessed *Il mondo artistico* elsewhere, "but the cut is secure […] not a great work of art but a successful one".[69] The opera's capacity to please audiences, if not critics, seemed to reside in this comfortable familiarity – what the *Gazzetta teatrale italiana* described as its "characteristic Italian indolence".[70] By a revival later that autumn, the opera had already begun to seem old in the opinion of the *Corriere della sera*, and was unlikely to have many future performances.[71]

If *Pagliacci* seemed a partial reheating of familiar material, it was perhaps precisely those qualities that endeared it to some Milanese audience members: clearly defined set-pieces, easily distinguishable melodies, and the *commedia dell'arte* presented in a mode both self-conscious and highly immediate.[72] While these qualities were dismissed by prominent Milanese critics as evidence of the taste of the "masses" – a move that reflected burgeoning modernist ideas of artistic progress – *Pagliacci*'s Argentine reception was noticeably warmer; indeed, it was precisely those qualities that Frexas had identified in Donizetti that seemed to appeal to certain Argentine critics. The right-wing bastion *La Nación* reported that the Italian drought had finally come to an end, and its appeal to the public was unmistakeable: presented "in a popular and entirely open environment, and the fact is that the public, high and low, of course surrendered themselves, abandoning the meticulous reservations of other times, and were impressed by the well-conceived effects contained in the work".[73] The opera was apparently also attended by a large contingent of Italian émigrés, above all in the cheaper gallery area. "If you had to judge a new product of Italian art, of this inexhaustible art that makes us all proud of the homeland, it was logical that our compatriots would flock to it", commented *La patria italiana*, underlining at once the diasporic hopes pinned on the premiere, and the opportunity for social uplift that the event afforded newly-arrived Italians.[74] While *Cavalleria* had been paired with Bellini, *Pagliacci* was conducted alongside the

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[69] "Certamente non è un'opera ispirata ad un elevato ideale d'arte [ma] il taglio è sicuro"; "non un grande lavoro d'arte, ma un lavoro riuscito". "Opera Nuove: *Pagliacci*", *Il mondo artistico*, 26 May 1892, 1-2.
[70] "Cronica Milanese", *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 2 June 1892, 2.
[71] "già invecchiata"; "Corriere Teatrale", *Corriere della sera*, 6-7 November 1892, 3.
[72] The contrast here with Verdi's *Falstaff* is significant: Verdi's final opera also played with familiar gestures from Italian history but did so in a far more detached and proto-modernist fashion. See Senici, "Verdi's "*Falstaff*"".
[73] "en un ambiente popular y como quien dice en campo abierto, el hecho es que el publico, alto y bajo, se entregó desde luego, abandonando meticulosas reservas de otras veces, y dejandose impresionar por los bien concebidos efectos que contiene la obra." "De Fiesta en Fiesta", *La Nación*, 21 June 1893, 3. The review is unsigned, but the author is most likely Frexas.
[74] "Si doveva giudicare un nuovo prodotto dell'arte italiana, di questa arte inesauribile che ci rende tutti orgogliosi della patria, era logico che i nostri connazionali vi accorressero numerosi." "Teatri e Concerti: La prima dei 'Pagliacci; al teatro dell'Opera", *La patria italiana*, 21 June 1893.

preludes from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Parsifal*, the latter still under its Bayreuth ban, thereby positioning *Pagliacci* within a wider framework of musical modernity than suggested by Milanese reviewers. Elsewhere, however, some authors in both Italian- and Spanish-language newspapers were harshly critical. Condemning the work as derivative and less successful than *Cavalleria*, *El Nacional* – a mouthpiece of the *generación de ochenta* – sought to position itself as above the popular fray, seduced by the work's noisy populism and its brutal appeal: "[an] excess of protests played out in unscrupulous newspapers; theatres full of spear-wielding men [literally, halberdiers; also a claque]; and much noise of drums and cymbals helping the effect of the storyline – even if not new and original – have given fame to 'Pagliacci': presented in a daring and rather populist style, and effective by way of the brutal harshness of its plot in impressing the coarse public".[75] Even more negative press came via the Italo-Argentine socialist newspaper *L'operaio italiano,* for whom *Pagliacci* "often exchanges vulgarity and cheap effects for dramatic vigour and realism, and it helps to confirm our reputation as bloodthirsty and as murderers".[76] For both the general public and many Argentine critics, it would seem, the success (but also the failure) of *Pagliacci* was precisely its capacity like *Cavalleria* to embody familiar Italian tropes: what a recent profile of soprano Eva Tetrazzini-Campanini described as "the beautiful country of sounds", or more negatively, a libidinal land of knife-wielding primitives – now presented in a musically-modernised form.[77]

Pagliacci's arrival in New York on 15 June 1893 came once again courtesy of the Hinrichs company.[78] While this time they offered the New York premiere in Italian – with the exception of the chorus – surviving critical accounts offer mixed assessments of the production's social standing, highlighting the production's uncertain cultural status.[79] According to *The Independent*, for example, the premiere of the opera was deemed a great success by an audience "which included a large part of the town's most discriminating and

[75] "Exceso de réclame desenfrenada en los periódicos venales, teatros llenos de alabarderos, mucho ruído de bombos y platillos que, ayudando al efectismo del argumento, sinó nuevo y original, presentando en una forma atrevida y asáz populachera, eficaz por la crudeza brutal de su desarrollo á impresionar al grueso público, han dado notoriedad a los "Pagliacci". "En la Ópera: 'Pagliacci'", *El Nacional*, 21 June 1893.
[76] "Il successo di "Cavalleria Rusticana" lo ha abbagliato, e come lui ha abbagliato tanti altri. Ne è derivata tutta una fioritura a base di coltellate che vorebbe essere novatrice e che, musicalmente, non presenta nulla di nuovo; scambia spesso la volgarità e l'effettaccio per la vigoria drammatica e per il verismo e contribuisce a confermare la nostra fama di sanguinari e de accoltellatori". *L'operaio italiano*, 23 June 1893. The contrast with the recent Argentine premiere of *Falstaff* is striking, Verdi's last work being covered with generous (if unspecific) praise.
[77] "Eva Tetrazzini-Campanini", *El Mundo del Arte*, 20 December 1892.
[78] The Hinrichs company had also recently offered the North American premiere of Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*.
[79] The production featured an international cast including Selma Koert Kroneld as Nedda, Aug. Montegrifio as Canio, and Giuseppe Campanari as Tonio; Campanari went on to have a major career at the Met.

zealous musical people".[80] Yet for Alan Dale in *The Evening World*, the location ensured an audience of "nice, cosy people, who have no musical pretensions and are pupils of no school" – a throwback to a kind of operatic consumption less bothered by high and low, and unfussed by national distinctions.[81] Indeed, as a further commentator observed, Hinrichs's company had in recent times distinguished itself by offering older Italian works performed "in tolerable fashion, at low prices and with much 'popular' success", and the presentation of Mascagni and Leoncavallo's operas was evidently a move to corner the contemporary market as well.[82] Even if the music lacked Mascagni's level of originality and inspiration, in Dale's estimation, it was a relief to see Mascagni's practices followed because opera had become a "very wearisome thing […] The old songs are fatiguing"; if "Leoncavallo has taken popular themes and written them up in his own style. Mascagni has originated themes", according to Dale, the result was still better than the "threadbare 'Trovatore'".[83] As *The Independent* remarked, *Pagliacci* was symptomatic of the trend among young Italian composers for presenting "short, intensely dramatic operas, emotionally based on the strongest passions of human nature […] and musically amounting to a fusion at white heat of the some of the most positive and soundest principles in Italian and German art". The *New York Daily Tribune* concurred that "in nothing is the new tendency which has taken possession of the young composers of Italy (so far as Mascagni and Leoncavallo are representative of them) shown more strikingly than in their choice of subjects, and the subordination of all the factors they control to dramatic effect".[84]

In the estimation of New York reviewers, then, the decision to derive the musical style from the dramatic content was the energising force behind *Pagliacci*'s success; and it was the shift to subjects derived from the South that had prompted this broader revitalisation of Italian opera's creative power. Within the Italian language press, *Il progresso italo-americano* once again thanked Hinrichs for his efforts, noting that the émigré community had no greater musical friend than the German-American conductor. If *Pagliacci* was perceived as a lesser work than *Cavalleria* by some émigré journalists – who even took it upon themselves to criticise the opera as a way to preserve Italian musical standards – the high

[80] Irnaeus Stevenson, "Music", *The Independent*, 22 June 1893.
[81] Alan Dale, "Pagliacci", *The Evening World*, 16 June 1893, 4.
[82] "Music and Drama: A New Opera", 18 June 1893 (possibly the *Transcript*; NYPL, Leoncavallo clippings files). As another critic observed, the sets and costumes "had evidently seen much previous service": Reginald de Koven, "I Pagliacci Produced", 16 June 1893 (NYPL, Leoncavallo clippings files).
[83] Alan Dale, "Pagliacci", *The Evening World*, 16 June 1893, 4.
[84] "Music: *I Pagliacci*", *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 June 1893, 7.

profile of both operas could still offer an idealised version of contemporary Southern life; a more elevated counterpart to the vaudeville sketches of contemporary life by then playing in the Teatro drammatico nazionale and the small café theatres of Little Italy.[85]

Attitudes towards Italy and Italian operatic culture of course extended far beyond the violence of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*; and Italy's regional divisions were well-known to more educated readers in both American cities, as earlier commentary on Verga's story suggests.[86] The Banca Romana corruption scandal had been widely reported in the international press since the bank's collapse in January 1893, an event which followed on from a period of national recession and would lead to the collapse of Giolitti's government ten months later.[87] The "Fasci" workers' movement in Sicily had also encouraged riots throughout the country, and highlighted stark regional and economic divisions around 1893. Milan, however, remained an obvious symbol of operatic sophistication for many foreign readers: particularly in light of the premiere of Verdi's *Falstaff* (1893) at La Scala. Milanese operatic sophistication could extend so far, according to one scathing New York report, that audiences did not even applaud things they actually enjoyed; but "no other audience so thoroughly understands quality of voices, accuracy of intonation, time, scenic effects and operatic traditions".[88] At times, an idyllic image of Italy's past could even seem to be under threat, with Verdi painted as the last of "the pure Latin type, of which Mazzini, Cattaneo, Cavour, and Sella are examples" – a breed becoming extinct by political pressures and a new world of finance.[89] In such a context, the rough appeal to the "masses" offered by *Pagliacci* could suggest one way in which this fading image (real or imagined) might be perpetuated in changing times – a self-conscious packaging of "popular themes", in Dale's words, that

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[85] Esther Romeyn explores the performances by Eduardo Magliaccio – stage name "Farfariello" in *Street Scenes: Staging the Self in Immigrant New York, 1880-1924* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 100-22. Magliaccio had emigrated from Naples to the USA in 1897 and became celebrated for his comic impersonations of Italian-American types, ranging from street sweepers to politicians and even Caruso. As Romeyn observes, these sketches were clearly inspired by the Italian clown tradition and the commedia dell'arte – precisely the environment staged in *Pagliacci*. On Italian immigrant theatre, see also Emilise Aleandri, *The Italian-American Immigrant Theatre of New York City* (New York: Arcadia Publishing, 1999).
[86] A flurry of guides published in these years aimed to educate readers about present-day Italy; from Helen Zimmern's *Italy of the Italians* (1906) to Henry James's *Italian Hours* (1909).
[87] The Banca Romana was one of Italy's six major banks and had long been printing money in excess of its reserves; both Francesco Crispi and Giovanni Giolitti had been aware of irregularities since 1887 but suppressed government reports to avoid denting consumer confidence. Criminal charges were not pressed against either men, but Giolitti resigned on 24 November 1893, and the scandal seriously damaged public confidence in Liberal Era politicians, boosting the Socialist party. See Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796* (London: Penguin, 2008), 340.
[88] "Verdi's Falstaff in Italy", *The Sun*, 30 April 1893, 3. Aspiring opera singers and composers continued to travel to Milan for lessons, most famously the Italo-Argentine composer and conductor Ettore Panizza (to be discussed in Chapter Four).
[89] Ibid.

suggested an awareness of changing times and opera's role in presenting vanishing mores in a seductive form. Frexas's categories of "mediocre, notable, bad, inspired, eclectic, radical, old and entirely new!" could thus in various ways be applied to both new works – a fusion at "white heat" that seemed to burn away familiar binaries; by modernising older tropes of Italy and Italian opera, while preserving fundamental tropes of immediacy and corporeality by a focus on the impoverished but impassioned South.

***Cavalleria rusticana* first performances**	***Pagliacci* first performances**
• **Rome: 17 May 1890 world premiere**	
• **Milan: 4 January 1891**	• **Milan: 21 May 1892 world premiere**
• **Buenos Aires: 28 February 1891 (pirated score); 8 August 1891 (official premiere)**	• **New York: 15 June 1893**
• **New York: 1 October 1891 (two productions in one day)**	• **Buenos Aires: 20 June 1893**
• **Buenos Aires: 29 June 1893 Cav and Pag first paired**	• **Buenos Aires: 29 June 1893 Cav and Pag first paired**
• **New York: 9 October 1893: Cav and Pag first paired**	• **New York: 9 October 1893: Cav and Pag first paired**

Table 2.1. *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* first performances

Fig. 2.1. *Cavalleria rusticana*, Teatro Costanzi, May 1890

Fig. 2.2. *Pagliacci*, early edition of piano reduction

The Invention of "Cav and Pag"

The eventual pairing of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* followed on from several efforts to match the operas with shorter works. *Cavalleria*'s initial pairing with *La sonnambula* was followed in Buenos Aires with acts from both *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*; while the Met's double-bill of *Cavalleria* with *Orfeo ed Euridice* alternated with one featuring Gounod's *Philemon et Baucis*. If *Pagliacci* clearly offered a similarly proportioned work, the pairing could also position the operas as evidence of an important Italian cultural shift. Accounts of the double bill's history have usually focused on the first presentation at the Met in December 1893; but these performances were in fact preceded by several earlier outings in both Buenos Aires and New York: first by the Ferrari company at the Ópera; and then by the Hinrichs company during their autumn season at the New York Garden Theatre.[90]

The first Argentine performances of the pairing took place only a week after *Pagliacci*'s local premiere. On 29 June 1893, the Ferrari company announced that the two

[90] On the Met performances as the double-bill's first pairing, see for example the Metropolitan Opera website: <https://www.metopera.org/user-information/synopses-archive/cav-pag>, accessed 1 July 2018. Helen Greenwald observes that the pair were also performed together in Trieste at the Politeama Rossetti on 2 April 1893: see her article "Coupling: Mascagni and Leoncavallo" (Royal Opera House Programme for *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, 2015). Trieste was an area similar imagined as part of a "Greater Italy".

works would be performed together that evening, with a pair of casts featuring many of the company's most eminent singers. "The public cannot but applaud the company, which in the same evening makes almost all of its best artists sing, and puts on stage two works now favourably listened to", commented *La patria italiana*: a pairing evidently considered a quasi-festival celebration of the company's achievements, and a response to warm public response.[91] Crucially, this perception seems to have been shared widely across the theatre, as a second performance on 4 July also featured a performance of a concerto by Alberto Williams – prominent local composer and critic – sandwiched between the two works, and likewise conducted by Cleofonte Campanini.[92] Critics across the Atlantic who continued to condemn *Cavalleria* needed to have their ears cleaned declared *L'operaio italiano.*[93] Even if the tenor's performance as Turiddu was excessively grandstanding for Italian citizens – not "a Sicilian of the mob" but rather a flirt ("un cascamorto") – the pairing could evidently appeal to a variety of audiences within the house: from patriotic Italians (who could accurately gauge the authenticity of such portrayals), high society operagoers, cosmopolitan nationalists, to more casual opera lovers for whom it was merely an opportunity to hear two highly-publicised works together. The impromptu arrangement of the pairing moreover suggests a responsiveness to local taste on the part of the Ferrari company: a willingness to adapt their offerings to local enthusiasms, and provide operatic entertainments (and future repertory staples) as yet unsampled within Italy.[94]

The Hinrichs company performances showed a similar sensitivity to commercial dynamics. As *The New York Times* noted at the beginning of that summer's seasons at the Grand Opera House, "these performances, given on a scale of cheapness commensurate with the price of admission, have been delightful to that large number of persons which has not the means to enjoy the more elaborate performances offered at the Metropolitan Opera House at

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[91] "Il pubblico non puo che plaudire all'impresa, la quale in una sera stessa fa cantare quasi tutti i suoi migliori artisti, e pone in scena due lavori, ormai favorevolmente ascolti". "Teatri e Concerti", *La patria italiana,* 29 June 1893: first performance of *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria* together that day at the Ópera. Eva Tetrazzini-Campanini as Santuzza, Michele Mariarcher as Canio, Antonio Scotti as Alfio, Giuseppe Cremonini as Turiddu, Linda Brambilla as Nedda (performed in the order Cav/Pag).

[92] See "Teatros", *La Prensa*, 5 July 1893. Cleofonte Campanini was Italo Campanini's brother, and the husband of soprano Eva Tetrazzini.

[93] "farsi tirare cioè un colpo di fucile nell'orecchio; così soltanto potrebbero modificarlo per la musica." The review continues by reiterating its negative assessment of *Pagliacci* compared to *Cavalleria*: "La replica dei "Pagliacci", seguiti dall'esecuzione del lavoro del Mascagni mise in evidenza una volta di più i grandissimi meriti del secondo lavoro e la deficienza di originalità del primo". "Arte e artisti: Teatro dell'Opera: Pagliacci e Cavalleria", *L'operaio italiano,* 6 July 1893.

[94] Palermo's Teatro Massimo would not open until 1897, with *Pagliacci* appearing in 1903 and both operas being performed the following year. They would not appear again until 1918. See http://www.teatromassimo.it/eng/archive/chronology-of-operas.html, accessed 28 January 2019.

high rates", even if audience members lacked sufficient exposure to "genuine art".[95] Upon relocating to the Garden Theatre during the autumn – following a season of thirty-five performances – they offered the double bill of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* alongside performances of *Carmen* and *Il trovatore* (see Fig. 2.3). While the casts usually featured a chorus containing a "large proportion of familiar flotsam from the wrecks of historic and prehistoric Italian companies visiting the United States" (in the words of Irnaeus Stevenson), the company still offered "the nearest approach to indigenous work in grand opera this whole country offers". When the production opened in early October 1893, *The New York Times* commended the venture of bringing cheap opera to the city and urged its readers not to be cautious about attending, particularly as Leoncavallo's opera in fact benefited from this pairing.[96] Writing the following month, W.J. Henderson pondered the precise appeal of the pairing for contemporary listeners:

> It is probable that when Mascagni wrote "Cavalleria Rusticana" he built better than he knew. The remarkable success of this short opera, and that of Leoncavallo's "I Pagliacci", can be attributed to nothing else so readily as to the unexpected answer to a public demand […] In a word, men and women of the day are not disposed to have their tragedies spun out to inordinate lengths. The three-volume novel has yielded to the story of forty or fifty thousand words. The epic poem has given way to the lyric in popular esteem. The electric telegraph has remodelled art as well as literature by creating a demand for speed in reaching a point; "Brevity is the soul of wit" has been written across every department of intellectual productiveness. There was bound to be a reaction in the world of opera.

Long operas were certainly nothing new, and they had posed no difficulties when written by Rossini or Meyerbeer. The source of the problem soon became clear, however:

> [W]hen Wagner came with his closely knit scores, built on a system which appealed at once to the emotion and the intellect, and from beginning to end claimed unceasing attention, the listener found his powers somewhat overtaxed […] The works of Mascagni and Leoncavallo may or may not live, for it is still an open question whether they have the essence of greatness. But they have shown how a powerful, absorbing music-drama may be constructed so as to occupy about two hours in performance, and send the hearer home, not with his emotional resources drained, but every feeling quickened, and his whole spiritual being thrown into a glow by the rapidity of the tragic history revealed to him […] The two young

[95] "Grand Opera House", *The New York Times*, 13 June 1893.
[96] "Garden Theatre: Two Modern Italian Operas Presented the Same Night by Mr Hinrichs", *The New York Times*, 10 October 1893. Rita Elandi was Santuzza, a certain Signor Guille played both Canio and Turiddu, Selma Koert-Kronold was Nedda.

> men of today have shown how to make the opera swift, direct, and irresistible in its effects. It will be strange if the public approval of their methods does not produce a school of followers."[97]

For Henderson, then, the accelerated pace of modern life had given rise to new forms of aesthetic impatience. Not only by virtue of their brevity, but also in their heightened speed and emotional forcefulness – "swift, direct, and irresistible in its effects" – the two operas had secured an especially important place within the new operatic repertoire. It is noticeable, however, that Henderson looks backwards as well as towards the quintessentially "modern" works of Wagner in characterising *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*. The prevalence of the arioso style emerges as a powerful meeting point between Wagnerian music-drama and the origins of Italian repertory opera – "a style which combines most of the powerful expressiveness of the Teutonic declamation with all the vocal elegance and essentially singable qualities of the Neapolitan manner", in Henderson's opinion, and matches the sense of "passionate blood" that HE Krehbiel had earlier identified in Mascagni's opera.[98] The operas overall seemed poised between competing expectations and demands: between the most "progressive" styles admired by the musically knowledgeable "earnest lover of art", and a musical style drawn from Naples; a contemporaneity that was at once ambitiously modern in musical style, yet agreeably undemanding in length and pace.[99] At the same time, the operas' presentation at the Garden Theatre seemed to push them away from the most elite establishments, and indeed to offer a more "indigenous" operatic entertainment.

The eventual migration of the double bill from the Garden Theatre to the Met prompted further critical sniping at Leoncavallo's opera; yet on the whole, the pairing seems to have encouraged a more positive perspective on Leoncavallo's opera – accusations of imitation aimed at *Pagliacci* faded into a broader sense of the artfulness with which both works had modernised earlier operatic tropes.[100] In the Italian-language press, similarly,

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[97] W.J. Henderson, "The New School of Italian Opera", *Century Illustrated Magazine*, November 1893.
[98] See "Cavalleria Rusticana: H.E. Krehbiel's Estimate", *The Musical Visitor*, November 1891, 290.
[99] As a contemporary history of Italian music argued, Mascagni and Leoncavallo "have returned to their own feelings and their own inspirations […] their sensuous nature, their musical language, and their overflowing love for music and singing". See Martin Roeder, "Music in Italy" (NYPL, Italy clippings).
[100] See for example "Opera's Striking Double Bill", 23 December 1893 (NYPL, Leoncavallo clippings). It is unclear whether the Met directly imitated the Hinrichs company in offering the pairing, but press reports suggest it was a decision made at relatively short notice. The relevant programme from the Metropolitan Opera archives lists a production by "Mons. Castelmary" (presumably Armand Castelmary, the veteran French bass then singing regularly at the Met, and who would famously die on stage in 1897 during a performance of Flotow's *Martha*).

positive and breast-beating rhetoric continued, with the composers swiftly joined together in critical discussion (see Fig. 2.4).[101]

Fig. 2.3. *Il progresso italo-americano,* 9 October 1893

Fig. 2.4. *L'eco d'Italia,* 24 December 1893

The expressions of tedium at Wagner's operas in Henderson's article – notwithstanding lengthy acknowledgements of the composer's immortal genius – are reflective of a broader turn away from German repertoire in New York by 1893, when Henry Abbey had returned to

[101] See *L'eco d'Italia*'s special Christmas issue, 24 December 1893.

manage the Met seasons.[102] In the view of some critics, such a return of Italian (and to a lesser extent, French) opera was indicative of a broader lack of cultural seriousness in the city.[103] The establishment of the Met, while clearly prompted by class-positioning, was also expected to produce a temple of high culture; the seven seasons of opera in German could be imagined by some as a "magnificent musical educational work that has taken New York operatic audiences far ahead of those in London or Paris" – especially after the "operatic nightmare" of Italian opera seasons.[104] Yet even if certain authors were dismayed by more recent developments, the warm public reaction to "Cav and Pag", and the enthusiasm demonstrated in Henderson's writings, nevertheless suggests a general move away from Wagnerian epics, in favour of more swiftly-paced and appropriately proportioned Italian works. In Buenos Aires, German operatic repertoire was certainly less familiar, and recent Wagnerian outings had provoked a combination of fascination and uncertainty on the part of even the most Idealist writers, that suggest a persistence of older musical preferences within a shifting cultural climate. *Lohengrin* had emerged as a popular repertory work – even performed by Enrico Caruso during his visit in 1901 – but the premiere of *Tannhäuser* in 1894 prompted a widespread sense of uncertainty about the music's appropriateness for an Argentine audience.[105] And yet in both cities, an initial fascination with Wagner had begun to cool, with New York especially enjoying a return to Italian repertory. The reception of both *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* seemed to underline an aesthetic confidence in these new works, and moreover an awareness of their appeal to a broad swathe of the opera-doing public: a sense, in short, of their attunement to a highly fluid idea of the "popular".

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[102] As explained in Chapter One, the German seasons came to an end in 1891, prompted by a revolt on the part of the box office holders. See Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), especially 152-6.

[103] "The fickleness of public taste, the popular craving for sensation, the egotism and rapacity of the artists, the lack of high purpose in the promoters, the domination of fashion instead of love for art, the lack of real artistic culture – all these things have stood from the beginning, as they still stand, in the way of a permanent foundation of opera in New York" lamented Henry Kriebiel at the beginning of the new century. Henry Krehbiel, *Chapters of Opera* (New York: Henry Holt, 1909; reprinted 1980), 212, cited in Horowitz, *Wagner Nights*, 155.

[104] "Souvenir of the Metropolitan Opera House, presented to the Patrons of German Opera, 1884-1891", 3 (held at NYPL Performing Arts Library).

[105] On Caruso's tours to Argentina, see Pedro E. Rivera, *Caruso en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de estudios Avanzados, 1994), especially 87-108. "Muchas reservas, en efecto, habian quedado en el ánimo de nuestro público respecto a la gran concepción wagneriana […] apenas si contiene concesiones de esas que el genial reformador se proponia proscribir quiado por su nueva y severisima concepción del arte a cuya regeneración se consagrara." "Teatro y Fiestas: Tannhauser", *La Nación*, 2 August 1895, 2. *Tannhaüser* received its first performances in Buenos Aires in 1894 and was considered excessively discursive in comparison with *Lohengrin*: see for example "Teatros y artistas", *El Diario*, 23 July 1894, 2.

Popular Classic

The recurrence of the word "popular" in various guises across reviews in both New York and Buenos Aires highlights broader questions about the appeal of Italian opera for audiences in these cities around 1893, and the specific aesthetic and cultural values attached to these two works. In Buenos Aires the word could be applied variously to an atmosphere or environment – such as *La Nación*'s mention of "a popular ambience" at the otherwise highly distinguished premiere of *Pagliacci* – or a musical style, as in *El Nacional*'s dismissal of the same work as characterised by "a daring and rather populist style", suited to please "the facile part of our public". In New York, similarly, comments on the Hinrichs' company's achievement in presenting opera "in tolerable fashion, at low prices and with much 'popular' success" suggest an understanding of the popular rooted not in sheer numbers, but a particular demographic – "nice, cosy people, who have no musical pretensions and are pupils of no school", in Alan Dale's assessment.[106] Scare quotes surrounding the word "popular" suggest precisely the uncertainty attached to the concept by the late nineteenth century, and the ambiguous social and aesthetic connotations it carried; while Dale's mention of Leoncavallo drawing upon "popular themes […] written […] up in his own style" elsewhere implies an ambiguous understanding of the popular rooted in musical features, or the opera's setting, or both. The tension between models of the popular rooted in production or consumption – between musical style and its appeal to a large section of the music-going public – thus intersected with questions of musical locale, and suggests broader uncertainties regarding definitions of the popular in both cities: ones in which social and cultural mobility made it increasingly difficult to define discrete sectors of the musical and social public. Is popular music a venue, a style, a subject matter, a price, an audience, or a marker of wide success, the commentary seems to suggest; and where can these performances (and Italian opera more generally) be accommodated within it?[107] Above all, the uncertain relationship between the "popular" and the lowbrow is at stake here: a sense that distinctions between the widely applauded and the intellectually and socially lowbrow were in flux and undefinable. Henderson's observations on the accelerated pace and brevity of the two operas suggest another point of connection between "Cav and Pag" and the popular – a style of music drama

[106] Alan Dale, "Pagliacci", *The Evening World*, 16 June 1893, 4.
[107] These questions, needless to say, have since been investigated by many scholars of twentieth-century popular music: studies that overall have highlighted the historical contingency of any single use of the term. For a recent summary, see John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 8th edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

appreciated not for its difference from modern life, but rather for its synchronisation with broader patterns of experience.

Such debates clearly had a more longstanding history, in both cities and elsewhere. As Matthew Gelbart has argued, conceptions of the "popular" had already begun to emerge in Western Europe by the mid-nineteenth century, as distinctions between high art music and folk music were supplemented by new understandings of the musical public sphere shaped by new market conditions.[108] Derek Scott has highlighted how new media and performance venues encouraged musical styles distinguished from an established art canon during the nineteenth century.[109] The emergence of distinctions between a highbrow, socially elite musical culture and a lowbrow, economically and socially impoverished culture in New York in the late nineteenth century has been the source of considerable scholarly debate in recent years, with Lawrence Levine's influential theorisation being challenged by numerous scholars.[110] For Joseph Horowitz, the culture of "sacralisation" decried by Levine was primarily a response to aesthetic currents rather than economic shifts, with efforts to promote Wagner (and Germanic music) by prominent critics and civic authorities painted as an act of cultural Enlightenment.[111] Karen Ahlquist has similarly examined an emerging rift between the social and culture elites in New York during this period, highlighting the importance of the Met's seven German seasons.[112] More recently, both Katherine Preston and Daniela Smolov-Levy have drawn attention to efforts to disseminate opera more widely in response to a growing sense of sacralisation: a program of cultural "uplift" that sought to offer social and moral improvement to the masses through the exposure to canonised works.[113] What unites all these readings is a sense that the status accorded to particular cultural productions was changing, whether through aesthetic, economic or demographic shifts; and that a highbrow musical culture (variously conceived as an intellectual endeavour or socio-economic

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[108] Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Art Music" and "Folk Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially 256-60.
[109] Derek Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19th-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris and Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[110] See Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
[111] See Horowitz, *Wagner Nights*; and his more recent *Moral Fire: Musical Portraits from America's Fin De Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), especially 75-124 on Henry Krehbiel. Horowitz's approving statement of Krehbiel's disparaging remarks on the closure of the Wagner seasons (*Wagner Nights*, 155) reveals his own commitment to a *Kunstreligion* – one that he perceives to be largely unrelated to social positioning, and even a positive remedy for wider social injustices.
[112] Karen Ahlquist, "Mrs Potiphar at the Opera: Satire, Idealism and Authority in Post-Civil War New York", in *Music and Culture in America, 1861-1918*, ed. Michael Saffle (New York: Garland, 1998), 29-49.
[113] Katherine Preston, *Opera for the People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Daniela Smolov-Levy, "Democratizing Opera, 1895-present" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University 2014), 31-137.

category) was increasingly opposed to a lowbrow. Within this opposition, the "popular" appears to occupy an ambiguous and socially mobile position, moving between older and newer conceptions of cultural production and reception.

Within Buenos Aires, Italian opera had served as a tool within a programme of civilisation from the 1820s onwards: imagined as a form of cultural uplift that would move the country away from the perceived barbarism of the pampas; and by the 1890s such rhetoric was well entrenched.[114] The establishment of *El Mundo del Arte* – a bilingual journal founded in 1891, regularly reprinting articles and reviews from the Italian press – confirmed Italian opera's continued position within an international elite culture, while promoting symphonic music as an alternative form of highbrow culture.[115] As historian Julia Rodriguez has argued, emerging forms of biopower in Argentina during the 1890s sought to mould "barbaric" Argentine citizens into modern subjects, a process in which European opera had long occupied a privileged symbolic role.[116] Opera had nevertheless also operated as mass entertainment for several decades, a situation increasingly in tension with the Idealist rhetoric of prominent musical critics, which emphasised art music's elevating qualities, and even its capacity for social cleansing. Horror at *Otello* arrangements was one obvious example: the "transcendental conceptions" of contemporary music could hardly be reconciled with operatic brass bands.

Performances of opera in both Buenos Aires and New York nonetheless extended far beyond the most socially elite (and financially exclusive environments); and repertory choices in smaller venues could in fact demonstrate surprising ambition. In 1895, for example, the small Doria theatre staged *Les Huguenots*, a project so improbable that *La*

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[114] Opera's civilised contrast with the pampas was at the core of Estanislao del Campo's 1866 poem *Fausto*, a comic retelling of Gounod's opera from the perspective of a gaucho. On Argentine urbanisation and "civilising" projects, see James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: From Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Nicholas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For an overview of the different theatres in Buenos Aires during this period, see Horacio Sanguinetti, "El arte líricio y la sociedad porteña" in *Buenos Aires 1880-1930: La Capital de un Imperio Imaginario*, ed. Horacio Vázquez Rial (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996), 395-413.

[115] On *El Mundo del Arte*, see particularly José Ignacio Weber, "¿Ópera o música sinfónica? El interés de la crítica musical en la modernización del gusto porteño. 1891-1895", in *Dar la Nota: El Rol de la Prensa en la Historia Musical Argentina (1848-1943)*, ed. Silvina Luz Mansilla (Buenos Aires: Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2012), 61-100. On the emergence of orchestral concerts across the nineteenth century, see also Vicente Gesualdo, *Historia de la musica en Argentina, 1536-1900* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Beta, 1961; reprinted University of Texas, 1998) Vol.2, 141-308.

[116] On social cleansing in Buenos Aires, see for example Julia Rodriguez, *Civilising Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), especially 11-53. For Rodriguez, there is a direct link between the forms of biopower exercised by the Argentine state in the late nineteenth century and later authoritarian rule, however superficially dissimilar their politics.

Nación's critic ventured out specially to witness the spectacle. "What wasn't big news? Until now the sacrosanct work of Meyerbeer had not left the august precincts of the Ópera. Almost all of her companions in the old repertoire were already tired of running the gauntlet through the subaltern theatres in the extra or mid-season."[117] Efforts to attend and review the performance at the Doria functioned as part of a broader program of cultural uplift; and audiences at smaller theatres could even be credited with greater powers of attention (and genuine enthusiasm) on Meyerbeer's work than the wealthy visitors of the Ópera, during "this first attempt at its secularisation". In New York a similar mobility is evident. As Smolov-Levy has shown, even works considered as explicitly transcendental as *Parsifal* could appear in smaller theatres, with Wagner's opera receiving performances in Yiddish on Manhattan's Lower East Side in May 1904.[118] The promotion of English-language opera likewise aimed to broaden access to an established canon of great musical works, even if these attempts clearly propagated the cultural practices of a socially-elite group as a universal standard. The Hinrichs troupe's performances of "Cav and Pag" can certainly be imagined within this model of operatic downward mobility: one that frames Italian opera as a vehicle of social progress.[119] By the late nineteenth century, it is moreover clear that distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow musical culture were fundamentally international in character: shaped by the transatlantic circulation of reviews, scores and performers, as well as the establishment of an international operatic repertory.

Notwithstanding these efforts, however, Italian opera occupied a more ambiguous position from the start by virtue of its exceptionally wide social circulation. If Wagner and Beethoven were at the top of the "sacralisation" hierarchy in New York – with cheap performances in less exclusive venues imagined as social amelioration on the part of civic authorities – Mascagni and Leoncavallo were less easily figured as socially uplifting. And in Buenos Aires longstanding declarations of Italian opera's elevating qualities sat awkwardly alongside discomfort at Wagnerian music drama, and widespread enthusiasm at verismo's

[117] "¿Que no era esto un gran novedad? Hasta ahora la sacrosanta obra de Meyerbeer no habia salido del augusto recinto del Teatro de la Opera. Casi todas sus compañeras del viejo repertorio estaban ya cansadas de corer la tuna por los teatros subalternos en los temporadas supletorias o de entretiempo; y en ellos recorgian a horre palmotadas y piropos de auditorios de buen diente y paladar blindado, halagos que ha tiempo no recibian ya del hastiado y soñoliento public del primer coliseo. Los Hugonotes han querido tambien - ¡lo que es el ejemplo! – echar una canita al aire y salirse a calaverar por esos mundos en busca de un coliseo en el que pudieran prometerse aplausos sonoroso, retumbantes, rabiosos, en vez de los contaditos y con sordina de guante blanco que a duras penas obtenian en su propria y solariega morada." "Teatros y Fiestas", *La Nación*, 12 September 1895, 5.
[118] Daniela Smolov-Levy, "Parsifal in Yiddish? Why not?", *The Musical Quarterly* 97/2 (2014), 140–80.
[119] See Preston, *Opera for the People*, 496-552.

"daring and rather populist style". The popularity of "Cav and Pag" and other Italian opera amongst recent Italian immigrants could even threaten to pull the repertoire into an emphatically lowbrow position. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, prejudice towards Italian immigrants had become a marked feature of public life in both cities by the late nineteenth century, and it would become even more severe as emigration rates ballooned.[120] These attitudes were shaped by a range of anxieties particular to both cities' rapid growth and ethnic diversity, with social disintegration and rising crime usually high on the list; but similarities between the two scenarios are also obvious. Writing in 1892, Z. Sidney Sampson (then president of the Brooklyn Ethical Society) lamented that the USA was being flooded with "most ignorant and undesirable of the masses of Europe", who encouraged the spread of disease, deteriorating living standards and various forms of moral vice.[121] By the early 1890s, reports on the mafia had begun to circulate in both the US and Argentine press, further encouraging a view of Italian immigrants as harbingers of social ruin.[122] High numbers of Italian seasonal workers in New York also fuelled perceptions that Italians refused to integrate into their host societies. As Sabina Donati has shown, the Italian government was soon anxious about the loss of Italian citizenship by emigrants, during a period in which dual citizenship was legally impossible. Distinctions between citizenship and nationality thus became a key tenet of Italy's emigration policy, with juridical control separated from "the nationality of the heart and the spirit" – one promulgated by Italian cultural institutes and banks.[123] Migrant workers thus furthered a sense that Italians' real allegiances lay outside New York.

In Buenos Aires, similar negative claims would be made by José María Ramos Mejía in his 1899 manifesto *Las Multitudes Argentinas*, which decried the dangerous miscegenation he perceived in the modern city. "Any numskull is more intelligent than the immigrant who has just landed on our shores", he asserted, with Italian arrivals especially distinguished by

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[120] On anti-Italian prejudice in New York, see David A. J. Richards, *Italian American: The Racializing of an Ethnic Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); *The Italians of New York: Five Centuries of Struggle and Achievement*, ed. Philip V. Cannistraro (New York: The New York Historical Society; The John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute, 1999); Joseph P. Cosco, *Imagining Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American Perceptions, 1880-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Jennifer Guglielmo & Salvatore Salerno, eds., *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[121] Z. Sidney Sampson, *The Immigration Problem* (New York: A. Appleton and Company, 1892), 296.

[122] See for example Marina Cacioppa, "Early Representations of Organized Crime and Issues of Identity in the Italian American Press (1890-1910)", *Italian American Review* 6/1 (2016), 54-75.

[123] Sabina Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 95-117. The expression "the nationality of the heart and the spirit" is from a bill presented in the Italian Senate, 29 May 1911; cited by Donati on 108.

their misery and stupidity.[124] In Argentina (unlike the USA), such worries were heightened by the association of Italians with socialist-anarchist groups, particularly following the riots and financial crises of 1890.[125] Given the size of Argentina's Italian community, efforts by the Italian government to maintain legal control over emigrants provoked major controversy, with the Argentine government asserting its rights over émigrés at the South American Congress on International Law in 1888.[126] But in both American cities, Italian immigrants could also serve as placeholders for wider anxieties about social disorder and poverty in a rapidly urbanising environment. These virulent attitudes became even more pronounced in both cities in the decade following 1893. By 1905, author Eliot Lord would summarise (in a study of contemporary attitudes towards Italian emigrants within the USA) that "[it] is urged that the Italian race stock is inferior and degraded; that it will not assimilate naturally or readily with the prevailing "Anglo-Saxon" race stock of this country; that intermixture, if practicable, will be detrimental; that servility, filthy habits of life, and a hopelessly degraded standard of needs and ambitions have been ingrained in the Italians by centuries of oppression and abject poverty".[127] If these claims rested on familiar distinctions between "Anglo Saxons" and "Latins", anti-Italian prejudice also became more aggressive among sections of the Argentine public as the new century dawned. David Rock has demonstrated that the rhetoric of social progress shaping the governments of the *generacíon de ochenta* in Argentina was informed by anxieties about social disorder that also shaped public policy in Europe, whereby both citizens and nations were placed "in a competitive evolutionary struggle for survival."[128] Social evolutionary thinking had already shaped relations between Northern and Southern Italy – with Cesare Lombroso's work on the South being especially influential – and these ideas were familiar to Argentine intellectuals.[129] As David A.J. Richards observes, racial prejudice in the USA functioned to justify structural inequality at

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[124] José María Ramos Mejía, *Las Multitudes Argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Félix Lajouane 1899); reprinted in *The Argentina Reader: Politics, Culture and Society*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles & Graciela Montaldo, trans. Patricia Owen Steiner (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 182-7. The most notorious fictional example of this prejudice is Eugenio Cambaceres's novella *En la Sangre* (1887) ["In the blood"], which as its title suggests is a story depicting the horror of miscegenation.

[125] See David Rock, *State Building and Political Movements in Argentina, 1860-1916* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). In New York, as Sidney Sampson remarked, such concerns were less significant. "As to anarchist and ultra-socialist views, we have no reason to apprehend any widespread serious consequences […] Every laborer who acquires a small savings-bank account is a capitalist". *The Immigration Problem*, 306.

[126] Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, Cosmopolitas y Nacionalistas: La Construcción de la Nacionalidad Argentina a Fines del Siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de cultura económica de Argentina, S.A, 2001), 36-8.

[127] Eliot Lord, *The Italian in America*, (New York: B.F. Buck & Company,1905), 17-8.

[128] David Rock, *State Building*, 109.

[129] Lombroso's *L'uomo deliquente* (1876) had interpreted Southern "backwardness" as a product of racial intermixing between Europe and Africa, as well as economic underdevelopment shaped by exploitative landowners.

odds with the liberal nationalist project, and thus it easily played out in similar ways across democratic nations such as Argentina.[130]

Attitudes on the part of American and Argentine citizens and officials were, of course, complex and varied. Awareness of the economic benefits of immigration and the industry of new arrivals was mixed with concerns about social fragmentation and decline, and unlikely alliances could form between discriminated minorities.[131] The US progressive movement regularly intervened to counteract negative stereotypes and social deprivation, with a number of publications from the early 1900s seeking to offer a less paranoid take on Italian arrivals. A special issue of New York magazine *Charities* was dedicated to Italian immigration in 1904, featuring articles discussing topics such as slum tourism in Little Italy, social integration, and Italian cultural activities, including the prominent presence of street music in the area.[132] US government commentary underlined the economic necessity of new unskilled immigration – "the Italian came because he was wanted; he was wanted because he was needed" – and noted that if "the Italians of New York, in some respects, may not be a very desirable fraction of the population […] it does not appear to be disorderly or dangerous".[133] Commentary by Argentine elites also reflected a range of positions towards Italian immigration, from sympathy to outright xenophobia, and with nuanced accounts of the specificity of Italian immigration competing with more generalised perspectives.[134] As Lilia Ana Bertoni has suggested, competing ideas of Argentine nationhood typically played out in

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[130] Richards, *Italian American*, 172.

[131] Ilaria Serra describes the attitudes of *The New York Times* as "shockingly ambivalent" in the early 1900s, in her study *The Imagined Immigrant: Images of Italian Emigration to the United States between 1890 and 1924* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), 41. On Italian-Irish relations in New York, see Paul Moses *An Unlikely Union: The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

[132] Sections from the special issue are republished in Lydio F. Tomasi, ed., *The Italian in America: The Progressive View, 1891-1914* (New York: Centre for Migration Studies of New York, 1972). Antonio Mangano's contribution to the issue, "The Associated Life of the Italians in New York City", observes that "[the] favourite operas of Verdi, Puccini, and Mascagni, always draw large Italian audiences at the Metropolitan, especially so if the leading artists are Italian": 106-12. The circulation of Neapolitan song amongst Italian emigrant communities has been the subject of several recent studies: see Marcello Sorce-Keller, "Continuing Opera with Other Means: Opera, Neapolitan Song, and Popular Music among Italian Immigrants Overseas", in *Forum Italicum* 50/1 (2015), 244 – 263 (focusing especially on Italian-Australians); and Goffreddo Plastino & Joseph Sciorra, eds., *Neapolitan Postcards: The Canzone Napoletana as Transnational Subject* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), especially 45-72 and 151-208. This repertory clearly has significant points of contact with Italian opera, but studies in this period suggest it remained largely a repertoire associated with the lower classes.

[133] *Special Consular Reports*, 1891, Vol.2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), especially "European Emigration", 209-332; quotations from 216-7 and 232. As the survey remarked, the Italian population of New York was now larger than the army that had achieved American independence, with 85% coming from the Italian South.

[134] See Diego Armus, "Mirando a los Italianos: Algunas imágenes esbozadas por la elite en tiempos de la inmigración masiva", in *La Inmigración Italiana en la Argentina*, ed. Devoto & Rosoli, 95-104.

relation to the Italian community, with restrictions on Italian-language schools (for example) being imposed during the 1880s to fight a perceived unofficial colony within the city.[135] Garibaldi became a particularly contentious figure when plans to erect a statue to him in Buenos Aires were formally discussed in 1896, given the Italian revolutionary's proud history in South America: only once it was agreed that the statue would stand in Parque Tres de Febrero – away from the city centre, but also not as part of a monument exclusively for foreign heroes – was the project approved by the council.[136] Tensions between an essentialist Argentine nationalism and a more cosmopolitan, constructivist model had been present in Argentina since at least the 1880s, and by the 1910s the former had assumed a dominant position in government and elite rhetoric.[137] Yet studies by emigration historians do also suggest that long-term adjustment for émigrés in Argentina was generally smoother than in the USA, aided by steadier rates of arrival and broader cultural (and religious) similarities.[138] But overall, however, the years around 1900 certainly did witness a shift towards greater antagonism towards new Italian arrivals in both cities. Anti-Italian prejudice in both Buenos Aires and New York can therefore be understood as fundamentally parallel: shaped by concerns about illiterate and impoverished immigrants, that threatened to derail ambitions of American social cohesion and economic supremacy. In the words of one consular report: "America is El Dorado as never before."[139]

In discussions of emigration, Italian opera and culture unsurprisingly loomed large, as familiar, old representations of Italy – Columbus, Michelangelo, Garibaldi, and increasingly even Verdi – and the reality of contemporary Italian immigration at times collided.[140] "We have had the Dagos and Lazzaronis of Italy who have helped to degrade and debase our national life", commented *America* magazine in 1890; "shall we not have the Italian artists and Italian operas which are calculated to widen and elevate our national enjoyment of

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[135] Bertoni, *Patriotas, Cosmopolitas y Nacionalistas*, 64-77.
[136] Ibid., 296-300.
[137] Ibid, especially 307-16. This will be explored further in Chapter Five.
[138] See Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*, on the different rates of adjustment and the greater ease for immigrants to find white-collar work in Argentina. For a more recent study on the USA, see Stefano Luconi, "Black dagoes? Italian immigrants' racial status in the United States: an ecological view", *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 14/2 (2016), 188-99.
[139] *Special Consular Reports*, 232.
[140] For Eliot Lord, for example, negative attitudes towards immigrants were bewildering and irreconcilable with Italy's illustrious history: "How strange is this flaunt of prejudice in the faces of Dante and Tasso and Petrarch – of Raphael and Michel Angelo and Canova – of Verdi and Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti – of Ristori and Duse and Salvini and Rossi – of Alfieri and Giacometti – of Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi!". *The Italian in America*, 233.

life?"[141] Uneasy statements about *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* in relation to the "popular" underline the highly ambiguous position these works (and Italian opera more generally) occupied at this point: poised between a respectable mass culture, and a lowbrow form of entertainment that appeared to threaten civilising norms. The prestige of Italian opera as an elite European art form was certainly recognised by prominent Italian citizens, both through the funding of public monuments, or through fulsome newspapers reports urging emigrants to attend Italian operas in high-profile environments – one that moreover could transform the everyday into something exotic.[142] Operatic nationalism could also prompt a bitter counter-reaction. Negative commentary towards Italian immigrants emerged with increasing force in operatic criticism during the 1890s and early 1900s, with Italian repertory – above all verismo – encountering critical scorn. Reviewing revivals of Leoncavallo's *Zazà* and Mascagni's *Iris* in 1907, for example – works earlier received with moderate if not exuberant praise – *La Nación* declared "[how] much vulgarity stacked together with useless sounds for inferior people! At least we must confess that this music lives up to the expectations of the people it describes", a clear dig at the largely Italian inhabitants seated in the gallery.[143] In New York, dismissive comments on Italian audiences by English-language reviewers also became a common occurrence from the 1890s, with Mascagni and Leoncavallo's tour both provoking negative commentary.[144] Italians in the audience or onstage could at times be considered interchangeable; the raw passions identified in Mascagni and Leoncavallo's works were uncomfortably close to intruders in the theatre.

Such an argument would broadly align with recent scholarship by Anibal Cetrangolo, Davide Ceriani and Stefano Luconi that has emphasised Italian opera's role as a focal point for broader social anxieties in Buenos Aires and New York around 1900. As these scholars have demonstrated, Italian opera at times became a flashpoint for social elites in these cities,

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[141] "'An Old American' and the Auditorium", *America: A Journal for Americans* 3/8 (1889), 265-6.
[142] A guide published in 1893 for new Italian arrivals by *Il progresso italo-americano* included articles discussing Rossini's centenary and reproducing an autograph by Verdi, alongside advertisements for the Met season: *Guida degl'Italiani in America* (New York: Progresso Italo-Americano, 1893), held in the "De Caro, Mulvehill and Menkhoff Family Papers, MS 2956", Box 2, New York Historical Society. Editor Carlo Barsotti's efforts to establish a number of Italian monuments in New York (including the 1906 Verdi statue) are also documented in the guide. On the efforts of Italian émigré newspapers to promote Italian opera among emigrants in Philadelphia, see Siel Agugliero, "Poaching Stereotypes: Opera, Race, and Italian Identity in Philadelphia (1870-1910)", conference paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, San Antonio, November 2018. In Buenos Aires, the Unione e Benevolenza (founded in 1858) offered the most obvious example of Italian cultural uplift, beyond diasporic newspapers; the society still has a large theatre. See Devoto & Rosoli, eds., *La Inmigración Italiana en la Argentina*.
[143] The review is cited in Cetrangolo's paper "The Arrival of Verismo in Argentina", delivered at the TOSC@Bologna conference, July 2015; I am grateful to him for sharing this with me.
[144] On Leoncavallo's tour, see my article "Celluloid Diva: Staging Leoncavallo's *Zazà* in the Cinematic Age", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (forthcoming, 2019).

for whom its growing association with the newly arrived émigrés made it increasingly untenable as a form of social capital.[145] In a related context, Larry Hamberlin has highlighted social tensions surrounding Italian opera in early-twentieth-century New York in response to immigration, that gave rise to a number of ragtime operatic parodies. According to Hamberlin, these reflected the ambivalence of middle-class audience members towards Italian repertory in light of working-class émigrés, as well their continued familiarity with it.[146] Within these accounts, I would suggest, Italian opera's reception history is interpreted primarily as a social barometer: reflecting ethnic and socio-political conflicts in minature. "Cav and Pag" would, on that basis, seem to offer the motherlode of operatic conflicts: depictions of the South – potentially negative but also impassioned – in an environment increasingly filled with Italian émigrés from these very regions; performed both in cheap theatres and in elite venues dominated by wealthy longstanding residents. In such a context, indeed, the very existence of "Cav and Pag" as a double-bill in the Americas – significantly preceding its appearance within Italy – seems tantalising. A performative celebration of the Italian South in two short instalments, perhaps; or a neatly cordoned-off presentation of an exotic Other, neutralised by its appearance as just another operatic commodity – even a kind of operatic minstrelsy.

Early American reviewers of the double bill clearly reflected a variety of attitudes, from pride, embarrassment, dismissal, adulation, exoticism and self-recognition, that reflected its topicality and Italian opera's complex social position. Discussions of the operas' popularity could expose a crucial set of tensions: between two works perceived as lowbrow subject matter, yet presented in an elevated genre; as comfortably old-fashioned, but also modernised in style and length; as basely appealing to the lower classes, yet also attractive to a broad swathe of the public. Negative criticisms of Italian opera certainly did become more pronounced in the following years; and yet this early evidence significantly nuances (and amplifies) accounts focused primarily on conflict, opening up a less steady set of divisions

[145] Ceriani's focus is on the period following Giulio Gatti-Casazza's appointment as director general of the Met in 1908, and he concentrates largely on critical antagonism towards Gatti-Casazza and Italian repertory by English-language newspapers; Luconi focuses on nationalist attitudes towards Italian opera by émigrés in New York post 1900. Cetrangolo examines the period 1880-1920, and similarly argues for a growing antagonism towards Italian opera on the part of Argentine elites in response to Italian operatic nationalism. None of these authors, however, offers a detailed examination of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*'s reception in these cities.

[146] See Hamberlin, *Tin Pan Opera*, 15-70. Hamberlin stresses racial associations between Italian-Americans and African-Americans on the part of North American audiences – a theme recently explored by John Gennari in his *Flavor and Soul: Italian America at its African American Edge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). The absence of reception history from Hamberlin's (otherwise rich) account raises problems, however: audience composition and response to these parodies are essentially unknown (and perhaps unknowable).

between ethnic groups and operatic audiences. At the same time, I would suggest, concentrating solely on the operas' immediate topicality risks overlooking equally important elements of this case study. The persistent "popularity" of the *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* pairing during the succeeding decade and more – one that would give rise to self-conscious studies of Italian emigration by Lord and Mejía – suggests a crucial point of continuity amidst cultural change: one that moreover encourages our attention away from the exceptional to the everyday; from the allure of the premiere (or occasional controversy) to the quotidian reality of musical life. As such, I would argue, considering the double-bill's immediate afterlife can now uncover broader implications for Italian opera's relationship to social history in this period; highlighting its importance both as a lightning rod for social tensions, and as a point of dissolution.

Verismo Afterlives (or Old News)

A comprehensive account of the pairing's performance history during the early 1900s is hampered by the surviving evidence. The sheer ubiquity of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* in surviving newspaper coverage from the period does nonetheless suggest something of their comforting familiarity to audiences in both Buenos Aires and New York. In the winter season of 1895 *La Patria degli Italiani* could confidently report that "[the] first work, the only really successful one of maestro Mascagni, still exerts a great attraction in the public, as it has been reproduced on all theatres, rich and modest, hundreds of times. The Ópera was very crowded last night [...] The expectation was for 'Cavalleria Rusticana' and it was not betrayed."[147] Shortly thereafter, the smaller Rivadavia theatre performed *Cavalleria* once again, now paired with two acts of *Rigoletto*, while the San Martín offered *Pagliacci* to a theatre that was "quite crowded and a very satisfied audience".[148] Later that year the Doria theatre – a "popolare teatro", in the words of *L'Italia al Plata* – would yet offer more performances of *Cavalleria*, while by the following year *Cavalleria* had migrated to the Folies-Bergère, a theatre devoted primarily to vaudeville and operetta, where it was paired with the one-act

[147] "Il primo lavoro, l'unico veramente fortunato del maestro Mascagni, esercita ancora una grande attrattiva nel pubblico, per quanto sia stato riprodotto su tutti i teatri, riccamente a modestamente, le centinaia di volte. Il teatro dell'Opera era ieri sera affollatissimo […] L'aspettativa era per la "Cavalleria Rusticana" e non fu tradita." "Teatri e Concerti: Cavalleria Rusticana, all'Opera", *La patria degli italiani*, 28 July 1895. A further review published on 9 August 1895 indicates this was the Ferrari company, with Bonaplata, De Marchi and Cioni.

[148] "abbastanza affollato e il pubblico rimasse soddisfattissimi"; "Teatri e concerti", *La patria degli italiani*, 2 August 1895, 2; and *La patria degli Italiani*, 18 August 1895.

vaudeville "On milanes in mar".[149] Indeed, while both operas continued to play with great success at the Teatro de la Ópera, the sustained mobility across different theatres in the city is striking even considering the ambitions of smaller venues. Thus *La Patria degli Italiani* could report with amazement the achievement of the Olimpia theatre in offering Leoncavallo's opera: "For better or worse *Pagliacci* has had a good success, due to the work in particular of the good tenor Caplioni, who was very much applauded. [...] The good company that acts on the stage of the Olimpia is achieving, we would say, the almost impossible: a music show, that is good and cheap".[150]

With the reopening of the Politeama theatre in 1898, further opportunities for large-scale performance were opened up, yet both Cav and Pag continued to circulate throughout the city in a variety of venues and forms. In May 1898, for example, *La Prensa* reported that performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* at the Politeama theatre would take place at the same time as a parody of the same work at the Apollo theatre, by an Italian company from Modena.[151] The performance of the National Anthem before the Politeama performance – a routine occurrence at the time – underlined the sheer ordinariness of this apparently topical opera, and its role in shaping a broader sense of civic community. The *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* pairing continued to be presented several times at the Politeama, and became established as a bankable feature of the company's repertoire: in July 1899, *La patria degli italiani* noted the Politeama would stage both operas to accommodate the visiting soprano Lina Cassandro: "The management of the Politeama set up one of those shows that would be said to be made to satisfy the needs of the regulars, and to attract to the popular theater a crowd of spectators."[152] By September 1899, *Cavalleria* had arrived at the recently founded Victoria theatre, to showcase soprano Linda Rebuffini; the following evening *Pagliacci* was given with the same singers, "to a very select audience, and it seems that the company has decided to prove that it is not only in the kind of comic operetta that it has very good values, and that even in a superior category it can set up very attractive shows": *Pagliacci* here

[149] *La patria degli italiani*, 5 June 1896.
[150] "Di bene in meglio i Pagliacci hanno avuto un buon successo, per opera in ispecie del brave tenore Caplioni, il quale fu assai applaudito […] La brava compagnia che agisce sulle scene dell'Olimpia sta realizzando, diremmo, quasi lo impossibile: uno spettacolo di musica, buono e a buon mercato". "Teatri e Concerti", *La patria degli italiani*, 29 June 1897, 2.
[151] "En los teatros", *La Prensa*, 24 May 1898, 6.
[152] "la direzione del Politeama argentino ha allestito per stassera uno di quell spettacoli che si direbbero fatti apposta per accontentare le esigenze degli abituees e richiamare al populare teatro una folla di spettatori"; *La patria degli italiani*, 23 July 1899.

serving not as lowbrow but rather as elite entertainment.[153] In March 1900, *La patria degli Italiani* would confirm that "the popular show announced tonight has for the performers known artists" – *Pagliacci* once again – and "on the road to great success the old Politeama still proceeds very gloriously."[154] The next day the newspaper declared that the series of popular opera performances continued to fill the house, and that "Yesterday the sign had announced the inseparable two, that is 'Cavalleria and Pagliacci', and a large public flocked to applaud the two popular scores".[155]

Performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* also continued to take place regularly at the Teatro Doria, the cheap theatre in the suburbs that (as *La Nación*'s critic observed) otherwise mainly performed older repertory. After the first performance in January 1893 (by the Boccalari company, performed *Cavalleria* alongside acts from *Rigoletto* and *Ruy Blas*), numerous revivals took place in the following months with different casts; January 1893 also witnessed a production at the Teatro Apollo. Indeed, *Cavalleria* was performed every season until the Doria closed down in 1903; and from *Pagliacci*'s first performance there in 1900 the two operas were often paired together; double-casting was frequent, and in 1896 an operetta entitled "Una mascherata di Pagliacci" had already been presented.[156] Eventually, fatigue set in: only celebrity singers could sustain interest in *Cavalleria rusticana*, which had been performed throughout the city every season since its premiere: "Even though our audience was saturated with *Cavalleria rusticana*, it still went to the opera en masse last night to hear it once again stimulated by the attraction of its two main interpreters being the tenor Caruso and the soprano Carelli", declared *La Nación*.[157]

In New York, the pairing similarly persisted for successive decades following its first appearance, becoming especially attractive at the Met as a vehicle for Nellie Melba and Emma Calvé'. "[Music] in Italy means opera", declared *The New York Times* in November 1895. "Scores upon scores of new operas are produced there every year, and that out of them only those of Verdi, together with 'Cavalleria Rusticana', 'Pagliacci' and 'Manon Lescaut'

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[153] "ad un pubblico sceltissimo quanto numeroso, e sembra proprio che l'impresa si sia prefissa di provare che non è solamente nel genere dell'operetta buffa che possiede dei veri valori, e che pur anco in una categoria superior puó allestire spettacoli attraentissimi"; *La patria degli Italiani*, 26 September 1899.
[154] "L'annunciato popolare spettacolo di questa sera ha per interpreti i noti artisti […] Sulla via dei grandi successi il Vecchio Politeama procede ancora gloriosissimo"; *La patria degli Italiani*, 24 March 1900.
[155] "Iersera il cartello aveva annunciato i due inseparabili, cioé "Cavalleria e Pagliacci", ed il publico accorse numeroso ad applaudire i due popolarissi spartiti"; *La patria degli Italiani*, 25 March 1900.
[156] César Dillon & Juan A. Sala, *El Teatro Musical en Buenos Aires: Teatro Doria, Teatro Marconi* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone) 1997, 18-49.
[157] "A pesar de hallarse nuestro público saturado de *Cavalleria Rusticana*, aún acudió anoche en masa a la ópera a oírla una vez más estimulado por el aliciente de ser sus dos principales intérpretes el tenor Caruso y la soprano Carelli", *La Nación*, 13 July 1900.

have claimed the attention of the transalpine world."[158] A review of the season published in April 1897 by the *New York Tribune* also took the opportunity to take stock of the fortunes of different repertory performed at the Met since its opening in 1883. While the most frequently performed works had unsurprisingly been those of Wagner (with *Lohengrin* coming in top at 64 performances) and *Carmen*, *Faust* and *Les Huguenots* coming in soon after, *Cavalleria* was – together with *Aida* – the most frequently performed Italian work in this period, with 24 performances in the thirteen seasons (it occupied twelfth place in the list; *Pagliacci* had received seven performances by this time). Dividing the repertoires into lists of German and Italian served for the author to demonstrate a basic point about the vibrancy of German opera in comparison with Italian, "for it must be borne in mind that the management of the opera is always guided by popular demand in arranging his lists week after week […] The question as to the present vitality of the two lists can safely be left to the judgement of the reader."[159] But even with the predominance of German repertory during the German-language seasons of 1884-91, Mascagni's (and to a lesser extent Leoncavallo's) work had managed to secure a place for themselves as part of the most familiar repertory performed by the theatre. The operas also moved outside the opera house. *Cavalleria* was featured in a tableau vivant in one of the first concerts at Carnegie Hall; and by the decade's end *Etude* magazine would lament that while opera had once been a staple of the barrel-organ repertoire, now it was just popular ditties, apart from the intermezzo from *Cavalleria*.[160] The ragtime parodies examined by Hamberlin likewise point to a familiarity with *Cavalleria* and its Intermezzo, even if performances venues (and reception) remain obscure.[161]

Even as *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* were increasingly paired together, the brevity of the two works also allowed for unusual pairings that suggest points of cultural similarity concealed by such lists. The American Castle Opera Company paired *Cavalleria* with the first act of *Fidelio* in 1899, as part of a cheap season of familiar works including *Carmen* and *Aida*, performed in English and with tickets available for only 25 cents. "For years [*Pagliacci*] has stood high, both here and elsewhere, in popularity and frequency of performance. Its fame, indeed, has travelled the length and breadth of the land […] The

[158] "Italian Masters of Music", *The New York Times*, 16 November 1895.
[159] "Opera for Americans", *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 April 1897, 3. The author's conclusion was that an American native opera, for reasons of cultural affiliation and artistic energy, must be built on German lines.
[160] See "Künstlerfest Inauguration Ball, 3 December 1891", held in the Bella C. Landauer Collection, Series 2 Box 98, New York Historical Society; and Henry C. Lahee, "The Street-Organ as Musical Educator", *The Etude*, 1 February 1899.
[161] Hamberlin, *Tin Pan Opera*, 15-28.

prologue, meanwhile, is as familiar as a household word" commented one author, in light of the opera's exposure through the Henry Savage company's English language performances.[162] Heard in the context of the largely Italian audiences of Leoncavallo's New York concerts, in fact *Pagliacci* appeared to be largely unmarked by changing musical styles: "Leoncavallo is as Italian as the Verdi of 'La Traviata'. His spirit is that of the old Italian opera".[163] From a fusion of Italian and Germanic styles, by 1906 *Pagliacci* could appear both the quintessence of Italian opera and of exported *italianità*.

Even as Italian opera came under attack from certain quarters, and distinctions between lowbrow and highbrow culture became prominent in critical discourse, it therefore seems clear that fundamental continuities existed throughout this period: both in terms of repertory, and in the expectations that audience members carried with them. Indeed, after the opening of the new Teatro Colón in 1908, *Cavalleria* was performed virtually every season for the first decade; and *Pagliacci* likewise received more performances at the Colón than any German works except those of Wagner. Such mobility was hardly unique to "Cav and Pag"; Verdi's works certainly travelled across theatres and public venues with remarkable ease. Yet the sheer topicality of this double bill, and its distinct presentation of a Southern model of Italian identity is nonetheless significant, I would suggest. If demographic change *did* offer a recipe for social conflict, operatic performances could also serve as points of social contact as well as tension: encounters in which Italian opera could act as a form of cultural uplift and identity formation for Italian émigrés; while the promotion of Italian opera by elites could act as a levelling or democratising force, that sought to generate a more cohesive social structure in a rapidly changing pair of societies.[164] Against that context, "Cav and Pag" could offer a richly-textured representation of *italianità*: at once deeply contemporary and topical in appearance, yet comfortably familiar in tone; both musically modern, yet unthreateningly routine; an operatic representation, moreover, when lowbrow and highbrow tensions could rise in conflict, or be held in momentary abeyance.

In such a context, I would argue, perhaps the most important aspect of Cav and Pag's reception history in both New York and Buenos Aires might ultimately be sheer continuity.

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[162] "Leoncavallo's concert", 11 October 1906 publication unknown (NYPL Leoncavallo clippings)
[163] "Leoncavallo", *The Post Express*, 26 October 1906.
[164] Eliot Lord again commented that "The love of music is practically universal. Almost all Italians have correct ears, if not trained voices, and the humblest bootblack is more likely to mark flaws in execution than the average opera-house goer. The works of the favourite composers are familiar to the masses, and the operas of Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Mascagni and others never fail to draw large Italian audiences in New York, if the leading singers are Italian." *The Italian in America,* 81.

Italian opera could act as a stabilising force during demographic change; and considerations of highbrow and lowbrow, foreign and diasporic, may not always have been the primary factor in shaping audiences' experiences of operatic culture, nor one position held exclusively by audience members. At moments the double bill could indeed take on the appearance of "a slice of life": the verismo fantasy of life and art converging being played out on the stage and in the streets of the city – Cav and Pag variously embraced and rejected as expressions of a Southern form of Italianness; a Southern version that moreover could represent Italy as a whole. But at other times, such topical associations could fade into the background, and the double bill served simply as another potentially exotic depiction of Italy or elsewhere, another fixture in the merry-go-round of canonic works by living and mostly dead composers; a double-bill nonetheless coloured by its standing as "Italian" opera, and the complex associations that carried. It is this dialectic between contemporaneity and the nostalgically familiar, I would argue, that is crucial to the formulation of *italianità* around Cav and Pag.

There is something to be said, then, for ubiquity. At one level, the operas were certainly unique, given their contemporary plots and their brevity. But they can also outline larger continuities: both for the frequency of their performances, and the attraction (and varying topicality) of these Italian representations. Acknowledging such basic continuities does not dismiss the important (and often vitriolic) debates that occurred in the North and South American press regarding Italian immigration. Yet attention to Italian opera *does* suggest ways in which music could intervene in broader cultural debates: not simply as a cultural symbol, but also as an affective experience.[165] Recent scholarship in late nineteenth-century urban history (notably by Joseph Ben Prestel) has argued for the history of emotions to be foregrounded more strongly, with issues of affect – such as love, shame or disgust – brought into a comparative framework: not as a universalising gesture, but rather to recover parallel trajectories and "a universalism, which allowed for particularistic claims".[166] The connections with "Cav and Pag" and *italianità* are revealing. Writing about Italian opera shortly after Leoncavallo's departure from New York in 1906, for example, a journalist for

[165] This line of argument partly echoes recent calls for Italian opera's political agency to be re-framed in terms of social activity See Mary Ann Smart, "Magical Thinking: Reason and Emotion in Some Recent Literature on Verdi and Politics", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17/4 (2012), 337-47.

[166] Joseph Ben Prestel, *Emotional Cities: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 195. Prestel's monograph inveighs against Eurocentric ideas of modernisation, calling for a more global history of urbanisation that places appropriation on an equal pedestal with innovation, and considers the social dimension of emotions in urban environments.

the *Musical Courier* commented on the powers of Italian music to liberate American citizens from the habitual patterns of thought and behaviour: "We are all Italian the moment we live."[167] The author was not Italian: he was North American. At one level, such sentiments merely replayed longstanding stereotypes about libidinal Southerners – the feuding Canio and Nedda from *Pagliacci* imagined as symptomatic of all Italian culture. The articulation of such clichés as an affirmative expression of a collective experience does, however, strike a new note in this context. Italy is presented as the embodiment of a benignly-imagined popular culture; the repository of collective experiences of life within a deadening and mechanical Anglo-Saxon culture; and indeed an identity than can be experimented with, even performed, at will; to borrow Thomas J. Ferraro's useful formulation, the experience of "feeling Italian".[168] The "beautiful country of sounds" evoked by *El Mundo del Arte* in 1892 was both a physical site and an imaginative space, one that could persist and even strengthen amid social change, and far from unique to Italian émigrés. "[Italy], whose atmosphere breathes melody by the same divine right that its soil absorbs sunshine and yields wine", and where "no peasant is too humble to feel and manifest a profound interest" in the operatic future: such well-worn rhetoric could persist even amidst broader social anxieties, and suggests a re-affirmation of Italy and Italian opera as the site of collective fantasy.[169]

It is what one could therefore term the *heterotopic* dimension of operatic performance that is important here: the sense that apparently stable identities could be momentarily in flux and reconfigured, judgments withheld or confused, by a collective experience of opera. Like De Amicis's ship, "Cav and Pag" offered a space in which social distinctions were at once exposed yet also briefly unmoored. Such claims easily slide into the transcendentalist rhetoric mocked by Frexas; yet it is the element of ordinariness that is crucial, and of opera's semantic plurality. Italian opera's position as a longstanding cultural practice could allow for a multiplicity of identities to exist within (and through) it.[170] Competing claims to cultural

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[167] "Leoncavallo and Other Latinisms", *Musical Courier*, 17 October 1906.
[168] See Thomas J Ferraro, *Feeling Italian: The Art of Ethnicity in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). Ferraro's study focuses on commercially successful images of Italian Americans in the twentieth century, rather than images of Italy.
[169] Giacomo Minkowsky, "Verdi and His Successors: Munsey", *Current Literature* 30/5 (1901), 617.
[170] Carl Dahlhaus's explorations of music's ontological relationship to history are perhaps surprisingly relevant here: in particular Dahlhaus's claims regarding music's "relative autonomy": "A piece of music retains its currency when deprived of its original historical setting, not merely as a relic and document of a bygone age but as an aesthetic presence of virtually undiminished impact". See his *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J.B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 111. Without subscribing to such an extreme view, the sense that music possesses a complex, even transverse relationship to history is one that has important echoes here: precisely in the sense of Italian opera's fundamentally variable or *plural* sense of topicality, and an uneasy alignment with broader socio-political trends.

ownership were undoubtedly a significant aspect of its American and Argentine history at the turn of the twentieth century; and yet I would contend such moments of conflict were perhaps less important than the ways in which opera could offer a point of momentary connection within the sprawling and ethnically-diverse modern metropolis.

Epilogue: Re-Imagining Italy

The elevated critical reactions to *Cavalleria* in parts of the Italian press were not matched by many new Italian works in succeeding years. As Arman Schwartz has shown, the category of "verismo" soon became a source of ongoing critical anxiety, with the declamatory vocal style and everyday settings favoured by new composers even seeming to harbour the demise of opera itself.[171] The presentation of characters from Italy's poorest regions moreover provoked concern and even anger from listeners for whom operatic depictions merely accentuated the negative publicity already being generated abroad by mass emigration. The effort to promote alternative images of Italy, especially around the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas, emerged as a rather blatant effort to formulate a more illustrious image for Italy abroad: one than associated the nation not with the desperate masses fleeing a failing national project, but rather buccaneering adventurers extending Italy's influence across the globe. As Ceriani and Luca Zoppelli have noted, efforts on the part of certain Italian critics to tout Franchetti as a future successor to Verdi suggest a desire to imagine Italian opera on more explicitly Germanic lines, and to leave the exoticised South of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* firmly in the past; while Leoncavallo's abandoned "Renaissance" trilogy rejected the present in favour of idealised Italian history.[172] Not until December 1926, with Leoncavallo already passed away, Mascagni conducting, and Mussolini now in power, did the pairing of Cav and Pag finally arrive at La Scala – heavily saddled with canon-building ambitions, and now firmly in Italy's operatic past.

And yet there is a sense in which these supposedly "negative" images of Italy – ones of Southern poverty on and off the operatic stage – offered a far more persuasive argument for Italy's global standing than the official projects pursued by the Giolittian government:

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[171] Arman Schwartz, *Puccini's Soundscapes: Realism and Modernity in Italian Opera* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016).

[172] Davide Ceriani, "Romantic Nostalgia and Wagnerismo during the age of Verismo: The Case of Alberto Franchetti", *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 14 (2017), 211-242. See also Luca Zoppelli, "The Twilight of the True Gods: *Cristoforo Colombo*, *I Medici*, and the Construction of Italian History", trans. Arthur Groos, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8/3 (1996), 251-69.

ones that sought significantly to reshape familiar images of Italy as a pastoral idyll in favour of an avowedly modern and progress-oriented European economy.[173] The circulation of Mascagni and Leoncavallo's operas in the Americas was certainly followed in the Italian musical press, with their enthusiastic reception abroad contrasting with critical moves away from verismo within Italy.[174] As Marcello Sorce-Keller has recently observed, distinctions between highbrow art and popular music had long been problematic within nineteenth-century Italy: not only through opera's wide social circulation, but because such a contrast frequently leant upon increasingly untenable distinctions between urban and rural.[175] By the early twentieth century, however, it is clear from early press accounts of Mascagni and Leoncavallo's operas – the easy taste of the "masses", for example – that such divisions were hardening. Yet the American reception of these operas positioned Italian opera ever more as a remnant of older cultural understandings. It is ultimately the role these familiar images helped to establish for Italy as a locus within a problematic notion of a popular culture, and in the context of an unprecedently international musical culture, that is crucial here. Italy, perceived through the lens of Cav and Pag, emerges as an imaginative space in which fundamental human behaviours and rituals can endure in a rapidly changing global society – one in which aesthetic and social distinctions can be briefly collapsed and identities reimagined. Rather than offering "progress", Italy could be imagined as the persistence of the comfortingly old within the new; as a form of modernity that nevertheless kept one foot in the past.

That sounds very much like an early-twentieth-century ideal of the pastoral; and such images were doubtless politically problematic across the Atlantic.[176] And yet I would suggest there is also a subtle form of strength here. Such a contention is as much a matter of intangible, historically vanished sentiments as hard evidence; yet some tantalising sources do present themselves. Was it an accident that Caruso's biggest-selling recording was of

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[173] Benito Mussolini would famously later dismiss such images by arguing he would dispel "the residual scepticisms of those fools [in Italy] and abroad who prefer the carefree, disordered, amusing, mandolin playing Italy of the past, and not the organized, strong, taciturn, and powerful [Italy] of the Fascist era". Cited in Michael R. Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 185.
[174] See for example *Il mondo artistico,* 1 August 1893, 7-8, on *Cavalleria*'s reception in Buenos Aires.
[175] Marcello Sorce-Keller, "Italy in Music: A Sweeping (and Somewhat Audacious) Reconstruction of a Problematic Identity)", in *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music,* ed. Franco Fabbri & Goffredo Plastino (London: Routledge, 2013), 17-27.
[176] Roberto M. Dainotto reaches broadly similar conclusions in his study of the mafia, *The Mafia: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion, 2015), which also discusses Verga's short story in the context of the early mafia and Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy, 13-54. Dainotto stresses the mafia's appeal to nostalgia on account of its emphasis on imagined honour and archaic social codes. What is significantly different here, I would suggest, is the broadening out of such definitions to encompass a wider idea of *italianità*; one achieved through specifically musical forms and poised between nostalgia and evident modernity.

Pagliacci, the tragic and impassioned clown, who chimed with an American image of Italy itself as performative, passionate, but in decline?[177] Or that "Cav and Pag" should have finally arrived on the La Scala stage shortly after the USA imposed its strict immigration quotas (especially affecting Southern Europeans) in 1924, and the Argentine economy began to decline (see Fig. 2.5)? "I do not believe I am exaggerating when I assert that nothing more 'Italian' has been created in lyric drama since *Cavalleria rusticana*", commented *L'illustrazione italiana* immediately after the 1926 La Scala performances.[178] Scare quotes again speak volumes of the uncertainty surrounding such definitions of *italianità*; and yet the author's sympathies are clear. In the highly internationalised and competitive context of the years leading up to (and following) World War One, these images might well have caused some Italian politicians sleepless nights; but they also helped to carve out a space for Italy and Italian opera as more than just cultural capital or diasporic nostalgia – perhaps instead a symbol of values not to be forgotten in a globalised, industrial and ever-more mobile world.

[177] Caruso's supposed "popularisation" of Italian opera via the gramophone, I would suggest, merely exploited a by-then highly familiar set of cultural associations; this will be explore further in Chapter Three.
[178] "Nè credo di esagerare si stimo che nulla di più "italiano" si sia creato nel campo del drammo lirico dopo *Cavalleria rusticana*"; "Cronica Scaligera", *L'illustrazione italiana,* 1-2 January 1927, 6-8.

Cavalleria rusticana di Pietro Mascagni alla « Scala ».

Pagliacci di Ruggero Leoncavallo alla « Scala ».

Fig. 2.5. Cav and Pag at La Scala, 1926 (images printed in *L'illustrazione italiana*, 1-2 January 1927)

Chapter Three

Italian Voices: Puccini, New York and *Madama Butterfly*

As Act Two, Part One of *Madama Butterfly* draws to a close, Cio-Cio-San takes up position in her shosi to wait for Pinkerton. The cannon has finally sounded in the harbour below, and Cio-Cio-San orders her maid Suzuki to decorate her home with flowers, and to bring the white sash and poppy decorations from her wedding night. Years of effort to present herself as an American wife are now forgotten, as she seeks to recreate a Japanese environment for her husband's return. Poking three holes in the screen, Cio-Cio-San turns her back to the audience, and the music that accompanied the letter-reading scene with Sharpless earlier in the act returns in an elaborated form, now accompanied by an offstage humming chorus.

When Puccini first encountered Belasco's source play in 1900, he was reportedly especially impressed by this night-vigil scene.[1] A fourteen-minute episode that traced the movement from dusk to dawn, Belasco's scene was one of his most technically sophisticated experiments to date with electrical lighting effects, and one that anticipated even greater invention in *The Girl of the Golden West* (1905).[2] From early on, it appears that Puccini sought a unique theatrical flourish for the opera's most telescoped representation of waiting.[3] As the opera was periodically revised following its La Scala premiere in 1904, the episode was separated into two sections marking the division of Act Two. The so-called "humming chorus" eventually concluded Part One in the 1907 final edition, as the lights dim and Suzuki and Trouble fall asleep (see Ex. 3.1); the curtain is directed to fall during the final bars. Dramatic fortissimo chords then announce the opening of Part Two, before an orchestral intermezzo gradually evokes the breaking of dawn, accompanied by offstage bird song and the voices of sailors crying in the harbour below.[4]

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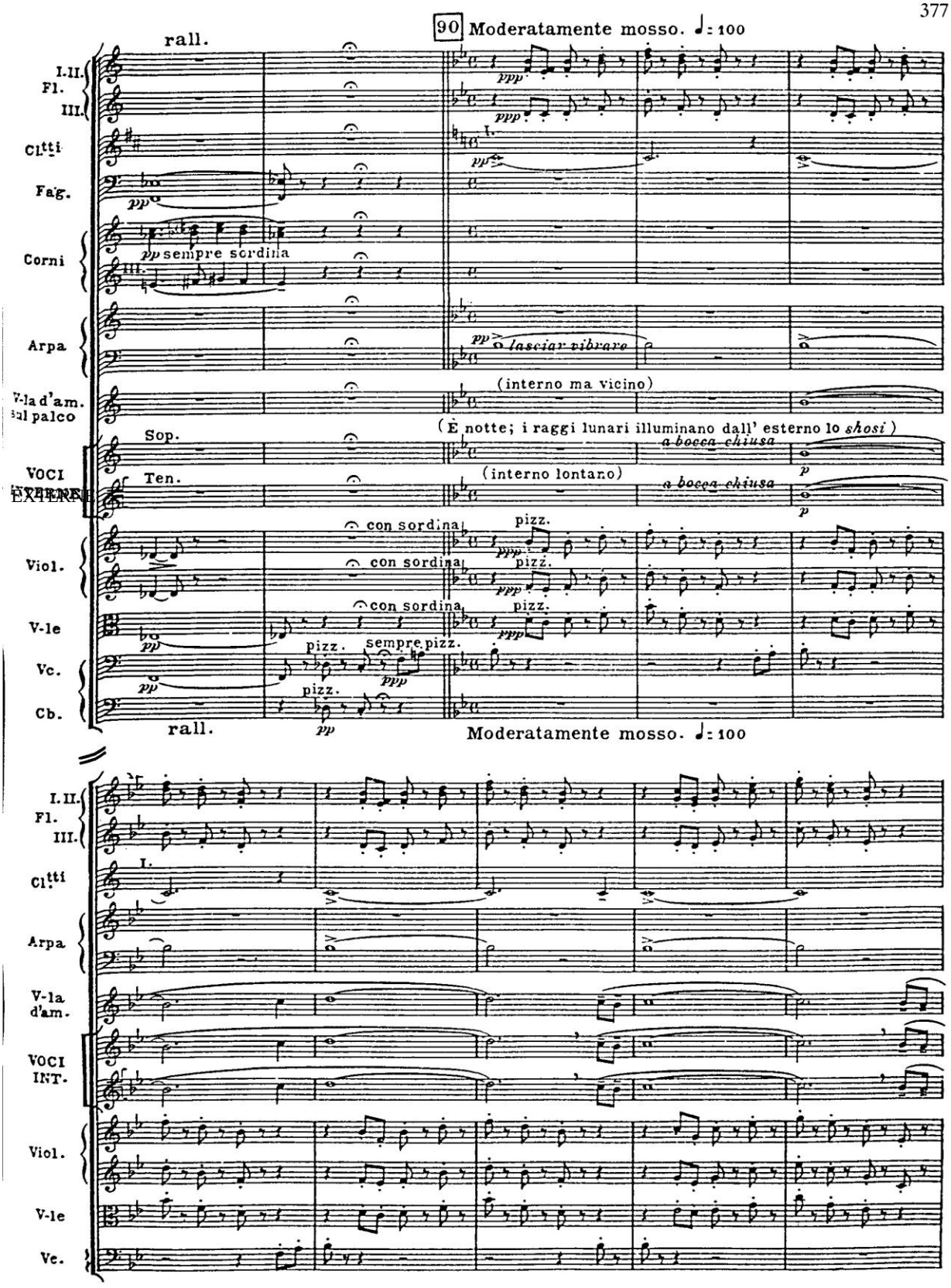
[1] Early New York reviews responded with similar enthusiasm to Belasco's technical ingenuity: see "Dramatic and Musical: "Madame Butterfly" gives Blanche Bates an Opportunity", *The New York Times*, 6 March 1900, 9.
[2] See Lise-Lone Marker, *David Belasco: Naturalism in the American Theater* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 86-9. Ellen Lockhart observes that Belasco and Puccini explored this effect further in Act One of *La fanciulla del West* (1910), a scene that – like Butterfly's night vigil – briefly also employs a humming chorus. See "Photo Opera: *La fanciulla del West* and the staging souvenir", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 23/3 (2011), 145-66.
[3] A letter to Luigi Illica in December 1901 cautioned the librettist to "[pay] attention to the last act, and that intermezzo, to serve as a chorus: we must find something good. Mysterious humming voices, for example." *Carteggi Pucciniani*, 215; cited in Michele Girardi, *Puccini: His International Art*, trans. Laura Basini (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 247.
[4] The re-writing of this section, together with the expanded role for Pinkerton in the opera's final scenes, is the most substantial of Puccini's changes between 1904 and 1907; a more prominent role is also created for



Ex. 3.1. "Humming chorus", Act Two, *Madama Butterfly*, Ricordi 1907 edition

Butterfly's family in the revised versions, and the first act was substantially cut to tighten the dramaturgy. Musical references here are from the 1907 version, unless otherwise stated.

Reports around the Milanese premiere and for subsequent performances all drew attention to the ingenuity of Puccini's musical solution for the night-vigil scene.[5] The importance of the scene in shaping perceptions of Butterfly's constancy in the face of changing circumstances is clear from the score. Directed to remain still, "rigida coma una statua", Butterfly peers out through the holes she has pierced in the shoho as her companions fall asleep: "solo Butterfly rimane sempre ritta ed immobile" ["only Butterfly always remains upright and still"]. The contrast between rigidity and a mellifluous dreaminess is also enacted musically. Marked *interno lontano*, the offstage sopranos and tenors intone a slowly moving melody in B flat major together with an offstage viola d'amore, a melody marked largely by stepwise movement and contrasted with pizzicato strings imitating the koto, always active at different times to the voices. The effect is of two different, concurrent temporalities: the inward voices sustained and slow against the more lively accompaniment, and evoking a sense of intense contemplation. The music is also almost entirely diatonic, doggedly so, except for the A flat that arrives in the melodic line at the peak of the movement, a reminder of the more uncertain music that immediately precedes the scene.

If the humming music at one level functions as a lullaby, this strange music might also be heard as a siren song, directed at Pinkerton. In Michele Girardi's memorable words, "Butterfly has finally found a sympathetic resonance with the refined sonorous landscape, remote voices that could be mysterious auspicious spirits, or benign ghosts".[6] Staring into the distance and communing with otherworldly sounds offstage, Butterfly might indeed easily be imagined as a figure like Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, with whom she shares a maritime setting and the sounds of sailors shouting. The sheer oddness of offstage humming – "bocca chiusa" – nonetheless also evokes earthier connotations. Rather than simply offering sound out to the auditorium, these hidden sopranos and tenors also direct their vocality inwards, preserving the voice's immediate connection with the throat. The "sonorous landscape" for this music is the singers' own bodies, with which Butterfly appears to share a profound kinship. Instead of simply gesturing towards an unknowable beyond, Butterfly occupies a peculiar acoustic twilight zone: an otherworldly soundscape that is also unusually

[5] This was one of the few moments to have been explicitly praised by some Milanese writers (despite audience noises during the birdsong scene), even if it was also found unnecessarily long. See for example "Madama Butterfly", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 February 1904, 1-3. American critics familiar with Belasco's play were unsurprisingly more explicit in their commentary on the scene.
[6] Girardi, *Puccini: His International Art*, 246-7.

corporeal.[7] Butterfly's return to familiar Japanese visual stereotypes at this moment thus positions the humming chorus as a heightened expression of orientalised beauty, as well as of Butterfly's devotion. The episode's purpose is precisely to lure Pinkerton back to Butterfly's home: as such, the chorus and the following intermezzo mark the final moments of illusion before Pinkerton's betrayal is finally exposed – the calm before the storm.

This emphasis on Butterfly's vocality positions her in some ways closer to contemporary Italian opera characters such as Tosca and Zazà than other orientalist heroines like Iris or even Lakmé.[8] Butterfly, after all, is a former geisha, and therefore a figure explicitly associated with performance and the voice. Yet *Madama Butterfly* has more typically been interpreted in relation to its depiction of Japan.[9] The opera's presentation of East-West conflict has long been a mainstay of its critical reception, and Puccini's orientalising gestures the subject of sustained scholarly criticism. Recent studies by Judy Tsou and Susan McClary join earlier accounts by Ralph Locke and Arthur Groos in situating the opera within early twentieth-century discourses of colonialism and misogyny. Puccini's negative portrayal of contemporary American culture (through the figure of Pinkerton) has at the same time been examined through the lens of contemporary discourses on America within Italy, in particular the exploitative treatment of Italian emigrants.[10] In that light, the depiction of Japan within *Madama Butterfly* has even been suggestively interpreted – by John Paul

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[7] Butterfly differs significantly in this sense from the characters of *Suor Angelica* (1918), who also appear in contact with distant sounds, but deeply spiritual ones. Arman Schwartz interprets this later development in terms of a "radiophonic" turn in Puccini's work, away from the realist soundscapes of *Bohème* and Tosca and towards an interest in mysterious sounds beyond ordinary human perception. See Schwartz, *Puccini's Soundscapes: Realism and Modernity in Italian Opera* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016), 71-98.

[8] The classic account of diegetic music in nineteenth-century opera remains Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). On the later nineteenth century, see also Heather Hadlock, *Mad Loves: Women and Music in Offenbach's "Les Contes D'Hoffmann"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Arman Schwartz, "Rough Music: Tosca and Verismo Reconsidered", *19th-Century Music* 31/3 (2008), 228-44.

[9] For a recent study, see Judy Tsou, "Composing Racial Difference in *Madama Butterfly*: Tonal Language and the Power of Cio-Cio-San", in *Rethinking Difference in Musical Scholarship*, ed. Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe & Jeffrey Kallberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 214-37; and Jonathan Wisenthal, Sherrill Grace, Melinda Boyd, Brian McIlroy & Vera Micznik, eds, *A Vision of the Orient: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts and Madame Butterfly* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). See also Arthur Groos, "Return of the Native: Japan in "Madama Butterfly/Madama Butterfly" in Japan", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1/2 (1989), 167-94; and more recently his "*Madama Butterfly* Between East and West", in *Giacomo Puccini and his World*, ed. Emanuele Senici & Arman Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 49-84; and Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Mari Yoshihara examines the Japanese reception of Puccini's work in "The Flight of the Japanese Butterfly: Orientalism, Nationalism and Performances of Japanese Womanhood", *American Quarterly* 56/4 (2004), 975-1001.

[10] John Paul Russo, "Puccini, the Immigrants and the Golden West", *The Opera Quarterly* 7/3, 4-27. Laura Basini has interpreted *Manon Lescaut* (1893) along similar lines, contextualising the later acts of the opera in terms of prevailing representation of embarkation to America and subsequent disillusionment: see her "*Manon Lescaut* and the Myth of America", *The Opera Quarterly* 24/1-2 (2008), 62-81.

Russo and Emanuele Senici – as a surrogate for Puccini's own Italy: a tradition-bound country marked by strong family structures and unprepared for the experience of modernity.[11]

The depiction of Butterfly as an unusually sonorous figure, however, invites a somewhat different reading of the opera's intercultural politics: one focused less exclusively on emigrant experiences, than on the changing operatic relations between Italy and the USA, and broader developments in Italian operatic culture. Recent studies of Puccini and his contemporaries, for example, have highlighted the extent to which the composer's interest in unmediated sound and broader notions of operatic realism appear shaped by new sound recording technologies.[12] Italy certainly did play an important role in the development of some early sound technologies, notably radio; and yet the geopolitics of early sound recording, and the shifting power relations shaping Italian operatic culture, have largely remained absent from musical discussions. By 1902, the Columbia Phonograph Company and Victor Talking Machine Records were mutually in charge of all the most important patents in the industry, and the vast majority of European companies – with the exception of the Milan-based Fonotipia company – were run by American managers and technicians.[13] Puccini himself had licensed the first recordings of his music in April 1903, with the song "Canto d'anime" recorded by the Gramophone Company.[14] Selections from his operas had already appeared by 1899; the first extracts from *Butterfly* were recorded in 1904.[15]

The gramophone was thus already established as an increasingly crucial part of the modern operatic landscape: an important new medium for operatic consumption, invented in the USA; and a novel means by which operatic authorship and celebrity could be constructed and publicised. Puccini's emerging interest in American operatic subject matter (and American source material) also coincided with his first transatlantic tours – a wider composerly trend that likewise pointed to shifting relations between Italy and the Americas.

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[11] John Paul Russo gestures towards this in "Puccini, the Immigrants and the Golden West", albeit focusing largely on depictions of the USA. More recently, Emanuele Senici has discussed the depiction of Butterfly in relation to late nineteenth-century Italian maternal discourses in his "Introduction: Puccini, His World and Ours", in *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 17-18.

[12] See Girardi, *Puccini*, in particular 157-77 (on *Tosca*) and 379-83 (on *Il tabarro*); and in particular, Schwartz, *Puccini's Soundscapes*. The influence on the phonograph on musical composition more broadly in the early twentieth century has been explored elsewhere by Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 185-246.

[13] Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph, 1877-1977* (London: Camelot Press, 1966; revised edition 1977), 126-33. Patent wars between Columbia and Victor were abandoned due to a mutual contravention of rights: 127. Finotipia was nevertheless founded by the Anglo-French composer and entrepreneur Baron Frederic D'Erlanger.

[14] Simonetta Puccini, "Foreword", in Roger Flury, *Giacomo Puccini: A discography* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012).

[15] Flury, *Giacomo Puccini*, 524.

Attending to the cross-flow of composers and recordings between Italy and the USA can thus illuminate the mutually-defining relationship between Italian and American identities in this period, as notions of Italian vocality and operatic authority were reshaped by new American media. In so doing, I would argue, this approach also invites a new set of perspectives on *Butterfly*'s drama of cultural conflict – supplementing familiar accounts of orientalism to consider the multiple tensions evoked by Puccini's opera.

The broad aim of this chapter, then, is to investigate how Italian-American relations were shaped around, through and within *Butterfly*. In what follows, I first examine Puccini's visit to New York in light of the recent premiere of *Madama Butterfly* at La Scala and against the broader popularity of Puccini's works in New York. Contrasting it with Puccini's earlier visit to Buenos Aires, I explore the reception of *Butterfly* and Puccini himself during the tour, within the wider trend of composers' transatlantic tours. I then locate Puccini's tour in the context of the emerging American gramophone culture and the booming New York operatic scene, suggesting how Puccini's own engagement with the gramophone – and the uses to which the technology was put during his visit – outline an increasingly uncertain relationship with the concept of operatic authorship at this time. If Puccini's transatlantic tour sought at once to assert the composer's international celebrity and to raise the profile of the Met, Puccini's encounters with the gramophone and American operatic culture suggest a fraught blurring of lines over operatic ownership and agency. These broader debates about the impact of American musical culture on Italy can ultimately provide important further contexts, I suggest, for understanding *Butterfly*'s portrayal of East-West conflict, and can encourage alternative ways of listening to this New World-Old World drama. Understood in this light, *Butterfly* might even emerge as a particularly acute meditation on the implications, allure and threats of the American operatic industry for Italian opera.

An Italian Composer on Tour: Act One

The invitation from the Met to visit New York for a festival of his work arrived at an opportune moment in Puccini's career. As is well known, the premiere of *Madama Butterfly* at La Scala on 17 February 1904 had been a fiasco.[16] Hounded by a claque (possibly coordinated by the Sonzogno firm), Puccini had withdrawn the work after only one

[16] Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Puccini: A Biography* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 143-6.

performance, and Ricordi was compelled to reimburse the theatre for its rental fees.[17] Writing anonymously in *Musica e musicisti*, one reviewer – most likely Giulio Ricordi himself – described the evening as one filled with "[g]rowls, shouts, groans, laughter, giggling, the usual single cries of *bis*, designed specially to excite the audience still more", with the atrium of the theatre occupied by audience members literally rubbing their hands with glee at the unfolding disaster.[18] The criticisms levelled at *Butterfly* were manifold: too derivative of Puccini's earlier works; too feminine and delicate in character; and evidently also too taxing on the audience's patience – a criticism Puccini clearly took to heart, given his subsequent decision to divide the opera's second act into two parts.[19] As Alexandra Wilson has shown, criticisms of the opera as a "frame without a canvas" characterised the work as excessively ornamental, eliding familiar Orientalist ideas of Japanese culture with Puccini's own opera.[20] Viewed from New York, the hostile reception of *Butterfly* appeared to confirm stereotypes of Italian rudeness, the "whistling, grunting, roaring, bellowing and laughing" in the aisles reflective of "the usual graceful Italian manner", even if the pathetic scenes in the opera between mother and child were felt sure to appeal to later audiences.[21] The opera subsequently appeared with great success at Brescia several months later, a less daunting venue that had previously greeted Puccini's works warmly, and whose enthusiastic reception of the work helped to secure further performances around Italy.[22] Ricordi's relationship with Puccini nonetheless appears to have been damaged by the encounter: supportive in the moment, the publisher later urged the composer to move on from producing "little sketches" and to compose a heroic opera, a criticism that appears to have catalysed a creative crisis from 1905 onwards.[23] Italian criticisms of Puccini's operas as problematically feminine and

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[17] On the La Scala premiere, see Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 97-124.
[18] Cited in *Letters of Giacomo Puccini*, ed. Giuseppe Adami, trans. Ena Makin; new edition rev. and introd. Mosco Carner (London: Harrap, 1931, revised edition 1974), 145-6.
[19] On the compositional history of *Butterfly*, and its numerous revisions, see Girardi, 195-258; and Arthur Groos, ed., *Madama Butterfly: fonti e documenti della genesi* (Lucca: Centro Studi Giacomo Puccini: M. Pacini Fazzi, 2005).
[20] Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 100-5. Wilson also observes that Italian ideas of Japanese culture were often shaped by French writers and artists, with first-hand contact with Japan usually limited to decorative objects: *The Puccini Problem*, 116. Even reviewers sympathetic to Puccini confessed that they found *Butterfly* a periodic re-hash of his earlier works: see for example "Cronaca Milanese", *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 20 February 1904, 1. A more positive report was published in "Madama Butterfly", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 February 1904, 1-3, which noted moments of "auto plagi" (self-plagiarism) but admired Puccini's "affascinante evocazione di un'anima femminile", 2.
[21] "Musical Notes: Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" and Its Reception at La Scala", *New York Tribune*, 3 April 1904, 8.
[22] The Brescia premiere was on 24 May 1904, with Salomea Krusceniski in the title role instead of Rosina Storchio; Cleofonte Campanini once again conducted.
[23] See Philipps-Matz, *Puccini*, 147-8.

decadent would reach their fullest expression in Fausto Torrefranca's 1912 monograph *Giacomo Puccini e l'arte internazionale*, which interpreted Puccini's works (and Italian opera more generally) as symptomatic of a degenerate musical and political culture within Italy.[24] More sympathetic Italian writers around 1904 would by contrast frame Puccini's special talent for depicting women in love in more positive terms: the composer's unique gift for drawing " a gentle stage figure who lives, rejoices, suffers and dies from love".[25]

Puccini had first encountered *Butterfly*'s source-play in London in the summer of 1900, when David Belasco's one-act work *Madame Butterfly* had been performed at the Duke of York theatre.[26] He subsequently returned to London in the autumn of 1904 to oversee performances of *Manon Lescaut* and *Tosca* for the opening of the Covent Garden season, and returned once again in October 1905 to witness *Butterfly*'s second set of performances at the theatre, as part of a series of international tours that sought to redress the humiliation of the La Scala affair.[27] Already by the summer of 1904, however, *Butterfly* had been heard in Buenos Aires, when it had been brought over by Storchio and Arturo Toscanini as part of their summer season at the Teatro de la Ópera. Critical reception had been generally enthusiastic – notwithstanding extensive discussion of the La Scala farrago – and the arrival of *Butterfly* spurred on representatives from *La Prensa* to invite Puccini to Argentina for a full-scale festival of his works. This was an event as yet unmatched by any other operatic centre; and it also marked Puccini's first visit to the Americas.[28] Puccini's arrival on the Savoia in June 1905 was awaited by a large group of local dignitaries, and his visit included performances of *Tosca, Bohème, Manon Lescaut* and *Butterfly*, as well as a revised edition of *Edgar* that received its world premiere on the occasion.[29] Puccini's visit provided a rich

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[24] On Torrefranca's book, see also Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 125-54.
[25] "una soave figura scenicha che d'amore viva, gioisca, soffra, e d'amore si spenga"; "Madama Butterfly", signed by "Leporello", *L'illustrazione italiana*, 28 February 1904, 166-7.
[26] Belasco's play was derived from a story by David Long John published in the *Century Illustrated Magazine* in 1898, itself possibly an adaptation of a true story, but doubtless shaped also by Pierri Loti's wildly popular novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887). On Belasco's play, see Marker, *David Belasco*; on its relationship to history, see Arthur Groos, "Madame Butterfly: The Story", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3/2 (1991), 125-58. The *Carteggi pucciniani* record a series of exchanges with Ricordi regarding the play from late 1900 onwards.
[27] *Butterfly* received its Covent Garden premiere in the summer of 1905 and was revived for the autumn season.
[28] The broad outlines of Puccini's visit can be found in Daniel Varacalli Costa & Gustavo Gabriel Otero, *Puccini en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Italiano de la Cultura, 2005). Puccini had briefly contemplated emigrating to Argentina during troublesome early years of his career, where he would have joined his brother Michele (who passed away in 1891).
[29] Press reports record the presence of conductor Leopoldo Mugnone, several performers from the Ópera and members of the Italian music society, as well as a certain "Dr Cittadini" from the Sociedad Dante Alighieri. See *El Diario*, "Puccini en Buenos Aires", 23 June 1905, 1. Mugnone conducted a performance of *Bohème* at the Ópera in Puccini's presence the following day. Critical reaction to *Edgar* was largely cool, notwithstanding efforts to paint it as an instance of operatic rewriting similar to the newly re-launched *Butterfly*. See for example

occasion for celebrations on the part of both Italian emigrants and longstanding residents, building on the positive reception given to Puccini's works on their first arrival in the city. Commemorative coins were produced; one local brewery offered a special "aperitivo Puccini" to toast the composer's arrival; and some local reporters even remarked on the cycle of festivities doled out to visiting celebrities, the repetitive banquets and speeches eventually blurring into one.[30] Puccini's visit crucially also appeared to contradict exoticising gestures frequently thrown at Argentina by European foreigners, mystified by the unknown culture of a far-distant land. "If the illustrious maestro comes to American soil with the intention of renewing his inspiration by discovering the accent of virgin melodies, albeit for the purposes of theatrical use, in the vague murmurs of the pampas, in the rabid whistling of our hurricanes, or in the sweet song of the indigenous birds, it will be a great disappointment, because even these birds do not sing, whistle or sigh anything at this time, other than the easy motives of *Manon, Tosca* and *Bohème*", commented *El Diario*.[31] The cause of this "impregnation" of Puccini's works in Argentina, the author argued, was the operas' popularity with women; and Puccini's skill in drawing complex female characters with a melodic skill marked by "a rare freshness, and an originality yet rarer still". Female listeners were the most stringent critics due to the "instinctive scruples of their natural delicacy", the author asserted, and it was women who had secured Puccini's reputation in Argentina as in all places in which "the hot Latin inspiration maintains its old prestige". Sentiments such as these differed markedly from more ambivalent Argentine reports in earlier years, in which Puccini's cosmopolitanism had occasionally been the cause of critical consternation. Reports during the tour instead underlined a familiar association between Italian opera, women and unmediated emotion.[32] Heard in such positive terms, Puccini and Argentina could in fact be imagined as aligned in their conservation of a threatened *italianità* – rhetoric that translated

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a letter by Italian journalist and composer Pier Giulio Breschi, published by *La Nación* under the title "El viaje de Puccini", 24 June 1905, 4.

[30] See "El album, la medulla y el banquete", *El País*, 26 June 1905, 2, on the repetitive nature of festive occasions. Puccini himself offered celebrity endorsements for various local products such as tonic water: see *La Prensa*, 24 July 1905, 9.

[31] "Si el maestro ilustre viene a tierra Americana con el objeto de renover inspiraciones sorprendiendo el acento de melodias vírgenes, auna para la explotación teatral, en los vagos rumores de la pampa, en los silbidos rabiosos de nustros huracanes, ó en el dulce canto de las aves indígenas, se va á llevar un chasco soberano, porque hasta esas aves no cantan, silban ó suspiran á estas horas, otros que los motivos fáciles de Manon, Tosca y Boheme." "Giacomo Puccini", *El Diario*, 23 June 1905, 1.

[32] See for example the report "La Nacion…scherzo", *L'Italia al Plata*, 30 September 1895, which disagreed strongly with *La Nación*'s negative comparison of *Manon Lescaut* and Massenet's *Manon* along national-stylistic lines, the Italian-language newspaper instead stressing Puccini's role in "La terra dei fiori, dei suoni e dei canti".

into approving terms the accusations of femininity and repetition that had dogged Puccini's Italian reception, alongside equally vehement accusations of decadent cosmopolitanism.[33]

The Argentine festival's ambition to offer a virtually-complete overview of Puccini's work – lacking only *Le villi* – clearly sought to tie together the histories of Puccini and Buenos Aires, and perhaps even encourage the composer to present a premiere in the city. Puccini's own recorded impressions of the city, though, are brief; most striking is his composition of a short anthem before his departure.[34] For local critics, Puccini's visit was compared in hyperbolic terms to the arrival of a God – one who had revealed himself in his works but had himself remained hidden, provoking instead "throbbing life in the living warmth of his works."[35] Puccini's music was said to fill both the opera houses and private homes and the streets, to an extent barely sufferable: "in the lustrous salons, the phonographs squeal out 'E lucevan le stelle' with famous persistence; in the streets, the mechanical pianos bash out 'Vissi d'arte', which is horrendous".[36] Three orchestral concerts arranged by Alberto Williams sought to demonstrate the range of musical activity in the city by including works by Bach, Grieg and Wagner alongside Puccini and Williams himself.[37] Visits by Puccini to local musical venues and organisations – such as the municipal police band – clearly highlighted the extent to which Italian opera had been disseminated throughout the city's cultural life, while underlying the continuity of geographically remote communities. America is simply the second half of Europe, declared *La patria degli italiani* shortly before Puccini's arrival; no significant cultural differences can be found between these two continents, only geographical distance – observations also marked by a sense of Buenos Aires's extraordinary economic development in recent years.[38] If Puccini's visit was a novelty in strictly musical

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[33] Wilson's *The Puccini Problem* provides the most in-depth account of these debates throughout Puccini's career, ones that were replayed in less antagonistic terms around many of his contemporaries.
[34] The Argentine hymn was printed in *La Prensa*; a reprint can be found in the appendix to Costa & Otero, *Puccini en la Argentina*.
[35] "Domingo Teatral", *El Diario*, 26 June 1905.
[36] "[En] los salones de lustrar, los fonógrafos chillan 'E lucevan le stelle' con una persistencia famosa; en las calles los pianos mecánicos golpetean 'Vissi d'arte' que es un horror". "Notas de Teatro", *El Diario*, 30 June 1905. By 1905, the most prominent importer and merchant of phonographs in Buenos Aires was Casa Tagini, whose adverts filled the pages of local newspapers during Puccini's visit. For more on the early gramophone industry in Argentina, see Guillermo César Elías, *Historias con Voz: Una Instántanea fonográfica de Buenos Ayres a principios de siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Fundacíon Industriales Culturales Argentinas, 2015).
[37] "El honor de Puccini", *El Censor*, 15 July 1905.
[38] "L'azione europea in America", *La patria degli italiani*, 25 May 1905, 5. Celebrating the anniversary of Argentine's independence, the newspaper commented "la nostra rivoluzione non é altro che lo smembramento di un potere europeo in due metá […] Nella civiltà del nuovo mondo tutto é europeo." As other newspapers observed, the 1,000,000 population figure had been reached in Buenos Aires at this time, a development that underlined the staggering growth of the city. See "Buenos Aires y su población 1580-1905", *La Argentina*, 1 July 1905. In 1900, *La Nación* had already proudly reported that Buenos Aires was now the tenth biggest city in

terms, then, it also followed broadly familiar patterns for visiting celebrities to the country, and asserted various (by then familiar) perceptions surrounding Puccini's music and its quintessentially Italian qualities.

An Italian Composer on Tour: Act Two

Considered in the context of the composer's Argentine trip, Puccini's subsequent visit to New York was notable less for its efforts to stage a similar festival – once again featuring all four of the composer's mature works – than for the fact that it was organised by the Met itself. Otto Kahn had offered Puccini $8000 for the six-week trip, an invitation that (as Maria F. Rich observes) was clearly intended to add lustre to the Met's season around the opening of Oscar Hammerstein's rival Manhattan Opera company.[39] The Met and Hammerstein had become embroiled in an extended legal debate over rights to perform *La bohème* (eventually resolved amicably), while the Henry Savage company had already performed the same opera successfully for several seasons in English, and had recently presented *Butterfly* in English as well. Puccini's affection for America, reporters noted, was as much for financial reasons as the superior performances offered of his works outside of Italy; the tour clearly sought to capitalise on this, securing Puccini an enormous fee while also raising the Met's global profile.[40]

Lavish press coverage had been given to Puccini during his time in Argentina. In New York, by contrast, media attention had to be actively encouraged via a series of press conferences and local premieres, particularly given that recent visits by Saint-Saëns and Elgar had made composers' tours less of a novelty.[41] Puccini's arrival at the theatre shortly before the curtain-up for *Manon Lescaut* on 9 January 1907 did nevertheless prompt a standing

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the world (London in first place, New York in second, and Paris in third; no Italian cities featured in the list): "Buenos Aires en 1899", 2 July 1900.

[39] See Mosco Carner, *Puccini: A Critical Biography* (London: Duckworth, 1958; third edition, 1974), 171; and Maria F. Rich, "Opera USA-Perspective: Puccini in America", *The Opera Quarterly* 2/3 (1984), 27-34. Puccini sailed on the S.S. Kaiserin August Victoria in early January, enjoying a luxury suite paid for by the Met. His arrival in New York was delayed by poor weather, and scheduled rehearsals at the Met for *Manon Lescaut* were missed; he eventually arrived on 17 January. See Philips-Matz, *Puccini*, 169-170.

[40] "Puccini's American Tour", *The Sun*, 4 November 1906, 9.

[41] Saint-Säens visited in November 1906, giving a series of concerts at Carnegie Hall with the New York Symphony and Walter Damrosch, as well as press interviews. He was by then in his 70s and acclaimed by the New York press as the grand old man of French music: see Richard Aldrich, "In the World of Music: Saint Säens the Musician", *The New York Times*, 4 November 1906, 42. Elgar had visited the USA in June-July 1905, travelling via New York to receive an honorary doctorate from Yale University, and he returned the following year for the Cincinnati May Festival: see Jerrold Northop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 461-63.

ovation from audience members, and the composer was soon recruited into a dizzying round of dinners, parties and press interviews. "It was a night of enthusiasm, and well it might be, for the New York public does not often catch a real, live opera composer", remarked one journalist of Puccini's arrival – an observation that gestured towards the fundamentally performance-based musical culture within the USA, as well as an underlying anxiety about correct musical standards.[42] Reports on visiting celebrity singers were of course a familiar trend by this time, with arrivals and exits (as well as performance fees) frequently detailed in the musical press. The visiting operatic composer, though, could still seem a relative curiosity; one who promised to close the gap between American and European musical cultures.

Press reception of Puccini's new works (*Manon Lescaut* and *Butterfly*) was generally enthusiastic. While *Bohème* had been criticised at its premiere in 1893 for its apparently disjointed lyricism, the newly heard works were praised for their sheer melodic charm and Puccini's delicate evocation of different soundscapes. *Butterfly* in particular received effusive press notes, paving the way for its exceptionally strong performance history in the city in succeeding seasons.[43] Critics above all stressed Puccini's success in generating poignant drama, in ways that translated earlier Italian criticisms (and anxieties) into positive commentary. If Puccini's melodic writing was still considered predictable and occasionally uninspired, the composer's careful orchestration and mastery of dramatic effect assured it a warm public response.[44] For the *New York Times,* for example, the opera offered a fresh take on a familiar tale – "[i]t is an old story" – while *The Sun* delighted in Puccini's evocation of "mood pictures": "He does not break butterflies on a wheel, but surrounds them with an emotional fairy land where everything floats like gossamers upon an atmosphere charged with subtle poetry."[45] Such sentiments built upon the responses evoked by Henry Savage's English-language production that had opened in New York two months earlier, and which had been praised both for its ornate staging and for the charm of Puccini's score.[46] "How lasting?" asked Henry Krehbiel of the opera's likely impact: "That will depend upon the

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[42] "Puccini's Manon Lescaut", *The Sun,* 19 January 1907, 5.
[43] *Butterfly* opened on 11 February 1907. The main cast was Geraldine Farrar (Butterfly) and Enrico Caruso (Pinkerton), with Louise Homer playing Suzuki and Antonio Scotti performing Sharpless. Arturo Vigna conducted, and the director was Eugène Dufriche.
[44] "Madam Butterfly Sung", *The Sun,* 13 November 1906, 6. *Musical America* was similarly positive: see "'Madam Butterfly' captures New York audience", 17 November 1906, 5.
[45] Richard Aldrich, "Mme. Butterfly sung in Italian", *The New York Times*, 12 February 1907; "Madama Butterfly Sung", *The Sun,* 12 February 1907, 9.
[46] The Henry Savage company toured the opera across the USA's east coast for nearly six months, a project partly supervised by Tito Ricordi. See Philips-Matz, *Puccini,* 168.

endurance of the present popular liking for operas which present pretty pictures, poignantly moving situations and music which appeals quickly to the sensibilities and stirs the emotions at least until familiarity breeds recognition of its formularies" – a situation at least better than the "reechy muck" of Giordano's *Mala vita* and Cilea's *Tilda*.[47]

The choice of Belasco's short play was also considered ideal material for the composer. "Puccini is the lyric Belasco of Italy", commented W.J. Henderson, via his rejection of set pieces in favour of potent dramatic situations, and his evocation of poetic atmospheres.[48] A report by Grenville Vernon the following decade went so far as to claim that the United States finally had a national opera – not because of its American characters, but because the nation had taken the melodramatic work so warmly to its heart. "In the story we have all the requirements for American popularity – passion disguised by the wedding ring, the deserted wife, the wife's fidelity unto death […] and then, of course, there is – The Child!"[49] Such observations indirectly drew attention to the changes Puccini, Giocosa and Illica had made to Belasco's play, emphasising Butterfly's role as a mother in a way that (as Emanuele Senici has observed) furthered the story's pathetic elements and its cult of maternity.[50] When expanding Belasco's one-act play, Puccini and his collaborators had likewise replaced Butterfly's pidgin English with elevated Italian, shaping a role whose dramatic arch moved from the delicacy of *Bohème*'s Mimi to the outbursts of Tosca, and heightening its tragic stature. The increased contrast between American and Japanese environments in turn foregrounded issues of cultural difference already present in Belasco's work, while generating further sympathy for Butterfly's plight.

Comments by New York critics therefore largely framed *Butterfly* – and Puccini's operas more generally – as emblematic examples of contemporary melodrama, whose stark moral binaries and extreme emotion appealed to contemporary gender constructions. Puccini's own declaration during the 1907 tour that *Butterfly* was his favourite of his operas

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[47] H.E. Krehbiel, "Puccini's Madam Butterfly", *New York Tribune*, 13 November 1906, 7.
[48] W.J. Henderson, "In the World of Music: The Stagecraft of Puccini in 'Madam Butterfly'", *The Sun*, 18 November 1906, 10.
[49] Grenville Vernon, "A Swarm of Butterflies", *New York Tribune*, 16 February 1919, 11. Vernon asserted that *Butterfly* was performed "perhaps twice as much as any other opera" in New York, a situation stemming in part, perhaps, from Farrar's continued presence at the Met.
[50] Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 17-18. For Senici, this emphasis reflected a cult of motherhood within *fino secolo* Italy in response to high rates of child abandonment, a political strategy that sought to promote motherhood to build a strong nation. This adaptation of Butterfly into a figure closer to a contemporary Italian mother-figure is perhaps unsurprising given the emphasis of empathetic identification that had run through the history of nineteenth-century Italian opera. Arthur Groos has examined the adaptation of the play (in particular the transformation of Butterfly into a truly tragic figure, caught between two worlds), in "*Madama Butterfly* Between East and West", *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 49-84.

suggested it as the supreme expression of his concerns with moral conflict, extreme emotion and female suffering.[51] Distancing himself from verismo, Puccini emphasised the need for music's own particular rights to be considered within a musical drama, and for melody to reign supreme.[52] If Belasco was famed for his attention to realist detail, it was ultimately the hot-blooded emotion of the plays that was understood to unite the playwright with Puccini – Italian melodrama here returned to its original source by transforming it into music.

The Japanese setting of *Butterfly* might at one level appear to challenge easy comparisons between *Butterfly* and older melodramas. New York critics were certainly alert to Puccini's use of modishly orientalist harmonies, and their role in differentiating the opera's two worlds.[53] And yet contemporary American perceptions of Japan could paradoxically also further views of *Butterfly* as a quintessential melodrama marked by extreme emotion and moral binaries, and whose heroine was in line with those of earlier Italian operas (not least *Tosca*). Exoticised as a deeply ritualistic and primitive society, Japan was at this time widely imagined in the United States in terms strikingly similar to certain depictions of Italy: an arcadian idyll unmarked by the passing of time; an "emotional fairy land" largely untouched by modernity. As Joseph M. Henning has argued, Japan's startlingly rapid modernisation in recent decades had uncomfortably challenged such views, while increasing levels of Japanese immigration to California had also raised anxieties in some parts of the USA.[54] The presentation of Butterfly nonetheless largely echoed older perceptions of the country, with the heroine's devotion to ritual and her emotional extremes contrasted with the insincerity of her American husband. As Richard J. Samuels has also suggested, Japan and Italy followed strikingly similar political trajectories from the 1860s onwards, with both countries plagued by an anxiety of underdevelopment and preoccupied by negative foreign perceptions; in

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[51] "Mr Puccini is well Satisfied", *New York Herald*, 12 February 1907. Puccini is quoted as commenting that "I confess I am very fond of my 'Madam Butterfly'. The subject appealed to me from the first. It gives fuller expression to my temperament and to my sentiment, than any other of my works – yes, not excepting even 'La Boheme.'" See also "'Madam Butterfly' Sung in Metropolitan", *New York Herald*, 12 February 1907 (same page).

[52] "Puccini no 'Verist'", *New York Tribune*, 20 January 1907, 9.

[53] See for example Richard Aldrich, "Success of 'Madam Butterfly'", *The New York Times*, 18 November 1906, 43.

[54] See Joseph M. Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000). As Larry Hamberlin notes in his discussion of American popular parodies of the Butterfly story, tensions between the USA and Japan were in fact high during the period of the Met premiere, in response to disagreements over Japanese immigration to California and the activities of the Asiatic Exclusion League. Ragtime presentations of the Butterfly story often offered a surprisingly sympathetic take on Pinkerton in the early 1900s, in line with the patronising take on Butterfly in Long's story. See Larry Hamberlin, *Tin Pan Opera: Operatic Novelty Songs in the Ragtime Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 145-84, especially 151-5.

Samuels's words, "[t]hey were perpetually trying to catch up".[55] In such a context, it is perhaps less surprising that Puccini should have been drawn to Belasco's play; and as unsurprising that some Milanese critics should have condemned the opera as an uninspired re-tread of Puccini's earlier, European-set works. Not merely a vehicle for extreme emotional display, *Butterfly*'s plot could contrast an American modernity with an archaic society that subtly echoed aspects of Puccini's own Italy – an internalised exoticism here reshaped through the lens of contemporary *Japonisme*.[56]

Taken together, the reception of Puccini's operas – and *Butterfly* in particular – during these weeks largely stressed his unique position as the head of a beleaguered Italian tradition: a figure who had managed to maintain an "authentic" Italian musical voice, despite his awareness of foreign trends and his interest in foreign settings. "[T]he operatic stage has no contemporaneous master who shares his popularity", W. J. Henderson asserted, and Puccini was facing the challenges of modernising Italian opera away from older forms without losing its national character.[57] The visit to New York was crucial in shaping this image. Italian audiences were indiscriminate in their praise of local composers, Henderson argued, and Puccini's success in cities such as New York was therefore a far more accurate gauge of his artistic merits (and, implicitly, of his Italian qualities). Puccini's visit to the city in this sense contrasted with recent, deeply controversial visits by Mascagni and Leoncavallo, that had been riddled with accusations of poor preparation and cynical exploitation of the American market. Both earlier tours had also been characterised by largely negative reviews of their more recent works, and in Mascagni's case by serious financial and legal difficulties.[58] "When will Europeans learn what their unfortunate compatriots report to them, what they read in the critical discussions of artistic and inartistic doings in America and what once in a lustrum they read about these United States in their own newspapers do not constitute one vast web of falsehood?" asked *The Sun* after the second concert of Leoncavallo's New York

[55] Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 12. Studies of Italian perceptions of Japan during this period are limited, however, with research concentrating largely on the reception of Japanese clothing and art.

[56] In light of the fiasco at *Butterfly*'s world premiere, critical commentary along these lines is limited. Reviews of the Brescia premiere nonetheless noted the enthusiasm of other Italian sopranos in quickly taking on the role: see "La Tetrazzini e la Butterfly", *Corriere della sera*, 3 June 1904, 4.

[57] "Puccini, the foremost operatic composer of today", W.J. Henderson, *Munsey's Magazine* 38, October 1907-March 1908, 549-53.

[58] Mascagni had to end his tour of New York early due to financial problems; see Alan Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his Operas* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 152-60. Leoncavallo's tour was largely marked by complaints about substandard performances and weak musical material: see my "Celluloid Diva: Staging Leoncavallo's *Zazà* in the Cinematic Age", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (forthcoming, 2019).

visit. "What sound excuse has [Leoncavallo]? Has he not heard what happened to Mascagni? Has he not heard what kind of a company sings to New Yorkers throughout their regular opera season? […] The past has taught Europe nothing."[59]

Damning though such comments were, the sheer physical presence of the composers did offer an unmistakable novelty untarnished by the poor performances.[60] "[T]he reception that Little Italy gave last night at the Metropolitan Opera House to Pietro Mascagni deserves to go down in musical annals as a red-hot red-letter occasion" commented one reporter. "In fact, a hotter time in the old town could hardly have greeted the ghost of Garibaldi or an outburst, on scheduled time, of old Vesuvius […] Imagine a wiry little football player, bull-necked, keen-eyed […] and then suddenly thrust into correct evening dress with one tiny bit of color at left lapel […] Then add to that bodily vigor the fire of artist's life and the grace of angels or of Theodore Thomas […] and presto! There's Mascagni."[61] These remarks both highlighted the appeal of Italian musical celebrities to émigré audiences, and Mascagni's own easy assimilation into a repertoire of Italian stereotypes: passionate physicality tempered by artistic grace. Assertions that the popularity of Mascagni and Leoncavallo rested largely with the Italian community were coupled with accusations of seeking to exploit the lucrative American market for financial gain. "It is not unlikely that some future historian of music in America, or some gossipy chronicler of local musical doings in the first decade of the twentieth century, will note the season of 1906-7 as that marked by a cutaneous eruption of foreign composers", prophesied the *New York Daily Tribune*. "The gentleman have come to us before, a few of them, in nimble pursuit of the dollar, which, when they are at home, they decry as the visible symbol of what the rude people of this continent call Art. But there is to be an unwonted influx of them this season."[62]

Discussions of the transatlantic tour phenomenon overall highlighted the extent to which these trips had become a rite of passage for European composers and performers: a necessary stage to demonstrate a celebrity's global renown, even if they were intended simultaneously to assert the continuity of older hierarchies between Europe and America.[63] In

[59] *The Sun*, n.d. (NYPL, Leoncavallo clippings)
[60] The Italian musical press, however, was quick to defend Mascagni against anti-Italian slurs, even while acknowledging the composer's own failings: see "Mascagni in America", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 November 1902, 1-2.
[61] October 9, 1902, publication unknown (NYPL, Mascagni clippings).
[62] "Signor Leoncavallo's Concert", *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 October 1906.
[63] See "The Truth About Transatlantic Tours: What Artists Get and What They are Worth", *Musical Courier*, 6 March 1907, 21-2.

that sense, musical tours offered an obvious contrast (as well as supplement) to the burgeoning American tourist industry to Europe – a trade that frequently reinforced views of Europe as a fading land of the past, while highlighting the richness of its artistic culture.[64] Like the notorious large-scale purchase of European art works, foreign travel by wealthy New Yorkers in general underlined the new economic relations that were developing across the Atlantic. Visiting Europeans might seek to exploit the wealth of the Gilded Age, but for the American elite the cream of European artistry was theirs for the taking.[65]

In contrast to his Italian contemporaries, the reception of Puccini was almost uniformly flattering. Even the composer's physical bearing could be interpreted as an indication of his talents: "In public, before an audience, he discloses a strong, thoughtful, refined face, a well-knit and ample, yet graceful, frame, and the quiet, confident, considerate bearing of a cultivated gentleman. Perhaps nothing in the organization of the man more clearly reveals itself than the efficient and fruitful union of emotional vigor with mental government. These are the secrets of his art."[66] Puccini's celebrity ensured that discussions of Little Italy featured only rarely in the English-language press during his visit. His popularity was understood to spread far beyond parochial émigrés, notwithstanding his close relationships with Italian singers based in New York.[67] Choosing not to conduct any of his works, but instead to coach singers and attend rehearsals, Puccini's principal attraction appeared to be his standing as a "real, live composer" – a figure who physically embodied Italy and operatic tradition, and could acculturate audiences further through by simply being there.[68] As literary scholar Amanda Adams has argued in relation to transatlantic lecture tours, the chief purpose of such visits was to re-insert physical presence, during a period in

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[64] See Christopher Endy, "Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917", *Diplomatic History* 22/4 (1998), 565-94. Endy observes that such established Old World-New World dichotomies did not preclude a range of different views, in particular by those who stressed a broader transatlantic political culture. For similar reports on Europe and America during Puccini's tour, see Vance Thomson, "The American Social Invasion of Europe", *Munsey's Magazine* 38, 545-8.

[65] On cultural capital amongst the New York elite during this period, see again Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 237-72; and Allen Churchill, *The Upper Crust: An Informal History of New York's Highest Society* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

[66] *Munsey's Magazine* 38, "Puccini, the foremost composer of today", 550.

[67] The details of the reception of Puccini amongst Italian émigrés during his New York tour unfortunately remain obscure: issues of *Il progresso italo-americano* from 1907 are currently missing from both the New York Public Library and the John Calandra Italian-American Institute. Surviving reports from other newspapers largely reiterate familiar nationalist rhetoric, and in fact note Puccini's disinterest in attending events organised especially by the Italian community: see for example "Il Maestro Giacomo Puccini", *L'araldo italiano*, 9 February 1907.

[68] Puccini in this sense was considered far closer to Camille Saint-Saëns than his Italian compatriots: see Hermann Klein, "Puccini – the Man and his works", in *Theatre Magazine* 7/1 (January-June 1907), 44.

which oral culture seemed in decline.[69] In musical terms, a composer's visit might similarly be understood in part as efforts to inject a "real, live composer" into an environment characterised ever more by new kinds of musical text; and in which repertory appeared increasingly detached from its compositional origins. The composer's body could embody their musical voice; unwilling or unable to conduct, Puccini at least supplied a tangible aura of Italian authenticity: one that could put audiences in contact with a lineage of now-vanished operatic composers.

The relationship between composers and works was not necessarily straightforward, however. As in Argentina, Puccini's public persona appeared carefully crafted to project a stereotypical *fino secolo* masculinity: smoking, women and a passion for hunting and cars were all staples of his New York coverage. Puccini's own operas nonetheless offered an unusual counternarrative to this image. Discussions of Puccini's works in New York – as in Italy and Argentina – were marked by recurring interest in his relationship with femininity, alongside more technical discussions of his work. The appeal of his operas to performers, for example, was understood to be their grateful vocal writing, their melodic ease and sheer vocality; while for audiences Puccini's dependence on familiar theatrical sources likewise encouraged a warmly immediate and unreflective response.[70] Critical reports, while generally enthusiastic about Puccini's works, also acknowledged that his triumph was above all with the public, with his operas provoking direct emotional responses more commonly gendered as female.[71] In comparison with the discourse in Milan, to be sure, the prominent female characters in Puccini's operas provoked comparatively limited discussion; the male American characters in *Butterfly* were of at least equal interest. And yet the sense that Puccini's music was itself decorative and perfectly matched to its content was nonetheless marked: the "pretty pictures" and "poignantly moving situations" described by Henry Krehbiel. If Puccini the man sought to present himself as a seductive gentleman, Puccini the composer was often presented in more ambiguous terms, with his music's easy-going lyricism and sensitivity to ambience casting him at some remove from American masculinity. A contemporary portrait in the *Musical Courier* by Gianni Viafora, for example, depicted the composer at the piano in an orientalised fashion, its art nouveau stylings similar to Théophile Steinlen's celebrated

[69] Amanda Adams, *Performing Authorship in the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Lecture Tour* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).
[70] "Puccini in America", *The Independent*, 62 (January-June 1907), 255-6; and "Grand Opera", 646-6, same volume.
[71] See "Salome, Melba, Etc by the Editor", *Musical Courier*, 2 January 1907, 25.

cabaret posters (see Fig. 3.1).[72] Puccini here appears a figure identified with music itself, and Japan and Italy appear largely indistinguishable.

Fig. 3.1. *Musical Courier*, 23 January 1907

The value placed on a composer's live presence was in that sense inherently unstable, as a fissure began to emerge between Puccini the man and Puccini the composer.[73] In both New York and Milan, in fact, the character of Butterfly appeared as symptomatic (indeed potentially derivative) of Puccini's broader approach to operatic composition – an excess of feminine emotion partly orientalised as Japanese, yet that also remained consonant with familiar understandings of *italianità*. Holding Butterfly dear to his heart, Puccini at times appeared to merge with her.[74]

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[72] *Musical Courier*, 23 January 1907, 37. Viafora was married to Gina Ciaparelli, a well-known soprano who recorded Musetta in the Act three quartet from *Bohème* alongside Farrar and Caruso.
[73] As Alexandra Wilson has argued, the image of Puccini cultivated by Ricordi in publicity shots appeared to aim precisely at framing him as an uncompromisingly masculine figure, in contrast to the accusations of musical femininity that emerged with growing force throughout his career. See *The Puccini Problem*, 31-9.
[74] Puccini provided autographs with musical quotations from *Butterfly* during the trip: see "Puccini's Impressions of America and Americans", *Musical America*, 9 March 1907, 3. Puccini reiterated his enthusiasm for American audiences and American women, as well as his preference for opera marked by dramatic situations and love themes rather than explicitly "national-patriotic" topics.

Opera Through the Gramophone

The majority of Puccini's time in New York appears to have been spent either at the Met, busy in rehearsals; at the Astor hotel (which he shared with celebrities including Enrico Caruso); or simply exploring the city. Images of Puccini and Caruso together tended to emphasise their exoticism in New York's urban landscape, and their adherence to stereotypically Italian patterns of behaviour.[75] Caruso could act as a guide for Puccini in the city, and the tenor's performances as Pinkerton proved especially satisfying for many critics. Press accounts here stressed the behind-the-scenes input of the visiting composer, however intangible such effects often were in practice.[76] Regular comparisons with the Henry Savage production similarly aimed to demonstrate the value of Puccini's presence, by coalescing disparate materials into a dramatic unity.[77]

Claims of Puccini's galvanising presence were nonetheless in growing tension with Caruso's burgeoning career as a recording artist, alongside many of his contemporaries at the Met. By the time Puccini arrived in the USA, Victor had managed to establish opera as a key part of the gramophone industry, an artform that could add sophistication to the new medium while the gramophone could also open up new operatic audiences.[78] Victor's Red Seal recordings of classical music and opera in fact constituted only a small fraction of the company's sales: the Black Seal series of popular music, low-prestige classical performers and speeches outsold them nearly five times over in the period leading up to 1925. Yet opera remained central to the company's advertising strategy, and was perceived by the management as bolstering the prestige of the phonograph more generally.[79] The role of the operatic composer, however, was remarkably ambiguous. In announcing their own program of Grand Opera recordings in 1903, the Columbia Phonograph Company had focused their attention almost entirely on the novelty of recording celebrity voices rather than composers.[80] Declaring that "the graphophone has preserved not only for us, but for all time" the voices of Marcella Sembrich and Eduoard de Reszke (amongst others), Columbia stressed that the

[75] Philips-Matz reports that "Puccini, Caruso and the Siscas [friends of Caruso] would sit around tables heavy with Italian specialities as crowds of curious onlookers peered through the windows". *Puccini*, 174.
[76] H.E. Krehbiel, "Metropolitan Opera House: Madama Butterfly", *New York Tribune*, 12 February 1907.
[77] See again H.E. Krehbiel, "Metropolitan Opera House: Madama Butterfly", *New York Tribune*, 12 February 1907.
[78] David Suisman, *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), especially 107-49; and Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
[79] See Suisman, *Selling Sounds*, 122.
[80] See "Grand Opera on the Graphophone", *Musical Courier*, 8 April 1903, 7.

recordings had been approved by the singers themselves, with F. Mancinelli (the Met's musical director) invited to endorse the discs.

While the recordings could aid in evoking the "presence and action of the original" for Met regulars – and offer non-aficionados a chance to acquaint themselves with the finest voices – the discs' chief benefit was claimed to be educational. This theme recurred in advertising for Victor, with advertisements similarly inviting students to adopt Nellie Melba's discs (for example) as their new singing teacher. Yet the actual music performed on these discs, and the artistic and financial claims of the composers being recorded, were notably absent. If this reflected in part the largely historic repertoire on offer (Verdi, Rossini, Bizet), it also points towards new patterns of consumption and listening promised by the recordings. No longer shackled by the visual immediacy (and evening-length) of live operatic performance, the individual singer's voice could instead dominate the listener's attention. Celebrity recitals doubtless provided a forerunner in this respect; yet the omission of composers is nonetheless significant given the rhetoric that would develop a decade later, one centred now on familiarity with the standard repertoire.[81] If focusing on singers' voices was one way to demonstrate the technical sophistication of the recording technology against a "real presence", then such an approach also seemed to chime with wider issues (and anxieties) around New York's musical culture – the emphasis on performance rather than composition. Produced in New York, these mementoes of the voice appeared to affirm a musical culture rooted in celebrity performance, even as they sought to transform fleeting moments into everlasting texts.

The extent to which early gramophone recordings could legitimately be compared with live performances is, of course, highly questionable.[82] As Richard Leppert and David Suisman both observe, early advertising repeatedly turned to the claims of fidelity, challenging listeners to distinguish the difference between live opera and its recorded counterpart.[83] "Which is which?" declared the adverts, a challenge that proclaimed the powers of the gramophone to offer entirely unmediated access to a singer's voice, however

[81] *The Victor Book of Opera* would appear in 1913, a move that David Suisman interprets as the arrival of opera firmly into the middlebrow: *Selling Sounds*, 178-203.
[82] *The New York Times*, for example, mocked Met director general Heinrich Conried's enthusiasm for Caruso's scratchy recordings: see "Topics of the Times", 22 August 1903, 8.
[83] Richard Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies of Modernity, Subjectivity and Nature: Opera, Orchestra, Phonograph and Film* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), especially 97-164.

much the listening environment might be different and new listening habits encouraged.[84] Adverts and parodies similarly suggested that opera recordings might one day supplant live performance, with future generations of musicians made unnecessary by the preservation of Caruso and Farrar's voices.[85] "Will the Artistic Profession be Superseded by the Artistic Machine?" asked *The Talking Machine World* during Puccini's visit, reminding readers that aeroplanes and wireless telegraphy had seemed mere fantasies only a decade earlier.[86] If such claims were excessively optimistic given the existing standards of technology, they still underlined how quickly recordings had started to impact on audiences' relationship with live operatic performance. The Met programmes during Puccini's visit, for example, contained numerous adverts for gramophone recordings that promoted celebrity singers. Composers, meanwhile, were relegated to the listings by music publishers. Even if gramophone companies insisted upon the faithfulness of their sonic copies of live performance, however, difference was of course a fundamental part of the appeal. Not just repeatability, but also the capacity for opera to escape beyond the opera house in a similarly sophisticated form. The sheer excitement of technical novelty was moreover an implicit part of all such posturing by gramophone companies: "Which is which?" effectively offered a modernised parlour game, in which musical appreciation was less important than distinguishing between vocal impressions.

This tension between sameness and difference – between an authentic copy and a new original – could raise troublesome questions. Copyright loomed above all, as it would soon do for cinema.[87] Gramophone companies of the time were famously litigious, eager to protect their recordings from unscrupulous competitors who transferred recordings onto new discs of a lower quality. For Victor, in one of its many legal disputes, it was for example clear that "the quality, value and reputation of a sound record are due, not only to the musical character and popularity of the particular selection, and not only to the musical ability and renown of the famous artists who sign [sic] or perform such selections in making the original sound

[84] In 1898, for example, the Columbia Phonograph company confidently declared in their in-house publication that "In homes remote from the pleasures of the city one having a Graphophone may, without trouble and at small expense, listen at will to the latest music of the opera house or concert hall." *1898, The Graphophone* (American Phonograph Print), 2. See also *The Edison Phonograph Monthly*, which ran from 1903-16 with regular advertisements for opera recordings.
[85] "If the opera stars can't come back in time, why not this at the Metropolitan?", 19 September 1914 (NYPL, Caruso clippings)
[86] "Is it mechanical art?", *The Talking Machine World* 3/3 (15 March 1907), 1.
[87] On the legal disputes between Ricordi and Italian cinema companies, see Christy Thomas, "From Operatic Stage to Silent Screen: Casa Ricordi and Film D'arte Italiana's 1911 *Aida*", *The Opera Quarterly* 32/2-3 (2016), 192-220.

record, but also to the skill, experience, methods and processes employed in the laboratory in making or taking such original recordings"; and "such services by said experts are unique, special, extraordinary, personal and unreplaceable".[88] Placing technicians on the same pedestal as composers and performers – even endowing them with qualities of romantic genius – was a crucial development. While these moves predictably sought to protect the earnings and reputation of individual companies, the effect was also to confirm recordings as a new form of musical text: one crucially different from live performance and scores, and that here was significantly identified with American business and technological expertise. As Susan Schmidt-Horning has demonstrated, this perception of the recording as a freestanding aesthetic entity (rather than a document of a live performance) became increasingly pronounced as the medium shifted to electric recordings.[89] Opera's visual focus arguably ensured that such developments arrived early, however, with Puccini's keen ear (and eye) for coordinating the audio-visual making the operatic disc a particularly alien entity to his own practice as an operatic composer. As Leppert observes, the absence of a visual component to early recordings could even induce an "acousmatic panic" amongst record companies, who invited customers to read reviews or peruse pictures to compensate for the absence of a singing body.[90] And yet the novelty of experiencing opera within the home nonetheless seems to have overridden such anxieties. Farrar recorded the entrance scene from *Butterfly* for Victor in the final days of Puccini's visit; a disc of Caruso and Farrar singing the Act One duet from *Butterfly* was released in May the following year to widespread publicity.[91]

These developments came to the fore during Puccini's visit, in an exchange in *Talking Machine World* later reprinted in several New York newspapers. Condemning existing practices by American recording companies as "musical piracy", Puccini lamented that he received no financial reward for recordings of his music – unlike the performers – and

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[88] "Victor Talking Machine Company versus Winant V. P. Bradley", 7 (NYPL, A.F.R Lawrence Papers, Box 5). These legal records appear to date from 1909, although similar cases had already been raised by Victor against earlier companies: see for example "Victor Talking Machine Company versus Albert T. Armstrong", (NYPL, A.F.R Lawrence Papers, Box 5 (1904)).

[89] Susan Schmidt-Horning, *Chasing Sound: Technology, Culture, and the Art of the Studio Recording from Edison to LP* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), 11-103.

[90] Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies*, 159. As Leppert notes, these anxieties about acousmatic listening were not entirely new: see for example Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[91] http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/1213, accessed 28 May 2018. This website holds both the recording and dates of recording through the Library of Congress website; the Library also holds Farrar's personal archive. *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* urged vendors in January 1907 to send catalogues to "each of the best families in your town", reminding them that "Grand Opera Records will often cause the sale of a machine when nothing else will do so". See "Grand Opera Records", *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* 4/11, 1907, 7.

distinguished gramophone companies from impresarios and publishers: "the manufacturers of these devices exercise no productive effort or stimulate or encourage original work in musical composition, which they exploit for their own gain".[92] Contrasting the situation with Italy's comprehensive copyright laws (conceived before the invention of the phonograph), Puccini painted American practices as immoral and extractive, a mere reproduction of existing music rather than an ongoing creative endeavour. Puccini had previously pursued at least one legal case in Europe during the summer of 1904, prosecuting two gramophone societies for having reproduced extracts from *Bohème* without permission.[93]

The response of the National Phonographic Company to the later complaints was blunt. "Signor Puccini and the other composers […] seem to suppose that the credit for the popularization of their music is due entirely to themselves. As a matter of fact, the inventors of this country have created an entirely new art."[94] Paul H. Cromelin, vice-president of the Columbia company in turn stressed the national envy that he saw underlying such complaints. "Italy has produced more great composers perhaps than any other country. As a manufacturer of mechanical reproducers of music, however, its position is of slight importance. A reading of the decision [to protect recordings under Italian copyright laws] will convince anyone that the predominant thought underlying it is the protection of its musical art as against the inventive and manufacturing capacity of other nations."[95] Even if this Italian law had been passed as recently as 1906, Cromelin argued, he had accurately identified a longstanding Italian protectionism in the face of new musical economies. Opera recordings, in this account, are not merely substantially different from live performances, but are a new aesthetic phenomenon, understood in explicitly national terms. Italy might be the land of singers and composers, but the USA was the land of recordings; if Italy had a unique position in operatic history, Italian opera and Italian voices seemed destined to be mediated evermore through American technology. While Giuseppe Giacosa had lamented on his visit to New York in the early 1890s that the European artist eventually felt discomfited by the absence of ancient

[92] "Dyer and Cromelin Answer Puccini", *The Talking Machine World* 3/3, 15 March 1907, 33.
[93] Puccini pursued the case in Brussels together with Jules Massenet and was awarded 300 francs in compensation: see "La musica dei fonografi e i diritti d'autore", *Corriere della sera*, 15 July 1904, 4. No Puccini biographies have yet explored this issue in any detail.
[94] "Dyer and Cromelin Answer Puccini", 33.
[95] Ibid.

history – "they miss the images and voices of centuries past" – then recordings promised to redress this situation, by offering an American repository of Italian sounds.[96]

Reports such as these highlighted the uncertain rights of composers (and musicians more generally) during a period of widening musical dissemination, and of Italian operatic uncertainty. Already in the first years of the operatic gramophone industry, Italian commentators had expressed concerns about the protections accorded to Italian music in a competitive marketplace – a concern exacerbated by the temporary closure of La Scala in 1898-9, when musicians had suddenly found themselves without employment. "The *trust* for music has arisen, or at least its on its way. It comes, on this occasion, not from America: it's born and bred on Italian soil, *made in Italy*" [English text in original], proclaimed *Il mondo artistico* in August 1902 in response to new efforts to protect the rights of composers, the move to English highlighting the American provenance of many such business developments.[97] In such a context, the arrival of the gramophone could for some writers promise the endurance of great Italian voices for the collective good, even if legends of the past were tragically lost to time. "Now that we have also discovered the gramophone, which as it were solidifies the voice, we can think of these lost treasures, as one thinks of some great monument of the Roman era, ruined and collapsed. If only one had been able to substitute eternal reality for fleeting memory", commented writer and librettist Renato Simoni.[98] Recording the operatic voice, in Italy as elsewhere, could in fact seem like the preservation of the person, their identity literally written into the grooves of the machine: "that part of him that is most personal, most intimate, most mysterious, the voice". Transforming the transient voice into a lasting document, the gramophone would seem to promise a tool for scrutinising subjectivity itself, as well as a collective Italian history. Contemporary efforts to create an Italian sound archive at Milan's Biblioteca di Brera were even trumpeted by the archivist as providing a model of its kind: "You know, in America they also do wonders", the author claimed, but "in America they have not yet known how to profit from the science of the

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[96] "[Mancano] le immagini e le voci dei secoli morti"; Giuseppe Giacosa, *Impressioni d'America* (Milan: Tipografia Editrice L.F. Cogliati, 1908; original publication 1898), 47. Giacosa's observations on the "intemperate" American character appears to have left its mark on Pinkerton.

[97] "Il *trust* della musica è sorto, o almeno sta per sorgere. Nè ci viene, questa volta, dall'America: è nato ed allevato sul nell'Italia suolo, *made in Italy*." "Il trust della musica", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 August 1902, 1. As James P. Kraft has elsewhere noted, the emergence of studio recordings also posed a challenge for unionised musicians: see his *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution 1890-1950* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[98] "[Ora] anche abbiamo scoperto il grammofono, che quasi solidifica la voce, possiamo pensare a questi tesori perduti, così come si pensa a qualche gran monumento dell'epoca romana, ruinato e dirrocato. Si sarebbe potuto sostuirire alla fuggente memoria, la realtà eterna." Renato Simoni, "Al Grammofono", *Il mondo artistico*, 11 March 1903, 1-2. Simoni was later one of the librettists for Puccini's *Turandot* (1924).

gramophone"; Italy by contrast could appreciate the voice's relationship with subjectivity to an unmatched degree.[99]

Despite these outward claims of Italian superiority, it seems striking that – advertising aside – the gramophone in fact provoked little attention in the Italian musical press in its early years of operatic recordings. While Caruso's first recordings prompted sustained coverage in New York and were accompanied by a flourishing industry of trade journals, Italian musical journals instead largely remained focused on the latest operatic productions and on budding efforts at musicological research – even if operatic activity in the Americas did occupy a prominent position in press accounts. Italy itself likewise proved a small market for early recordings, certainly in comparison to New York or London, and as the obscure later history of the Fonotipia firm would suggest.[100] In large part, perhaps, this reflected the sheer number of theatres constructed during the nineteenth century, discouraging audiences from spending money on recordings of music available near home. And yet the absence of rhetoric also suggests that such indifference or intolerance was at least partly aesthetic: a sense that the gramophone's function was chiefly scientific, preserving voices for the future rather than for enjoyment in the present; and that the "solidification" of the voice moreover entailed an alienating loss of human presence. If the gramophone could carry Italian voices across the oceans, the recording process could perhaps even appear a further stage for some listeners in a wider crisis of the Italian singing voice: an unpleasant distortion of Italian vocality through new technological means.[101]

Opera records might at one level, then, be assimilated into a broader pattern of musical nation-building through an Italian operatic canon: a national museum of voices. The industry's reliance on American technology and funding nonetheless unsettled this narrative: artistic and legal disputes highlighted the new technology as one in significant conflict with the rights of composers and any idea of an Italian national patrimony, an exploitation of

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[99] "Si sa, in America si fanno sempre meraviglie […] in America non si è finora saputo trarre profitto per la scienza dai fonografo". "A proposito degli archivi fonografici": a letter from G. Fumagalli, a librarian at the Brera, published in *Corriere della sera*, 11 March 1904, 3.

[100] The Fonotipia history was first addressed in the 1950s: see J.R. Bennett, *Dischi Fonotipia – A Golden Treasury* (Ipswich: Record Collector Shop, 1953).

[101] See for example "La eterna questione: la decadenza dell'arte del canto", *Il mondo artistico*, 11 June 1903, 1-2. As Laura Protano-Biggs has argued, increasingly dramatic forms of vocal production from the 1850s onwards had already led to concerns amongst Milanese critics about exhausted voices and operatic decline. These anxieties echoed broader concerns about the culture of "work" in *fine secolo* Milan, and the impact of industrialisation on workers' bodies. See her "Musical Materialities in Milan and Liberal Italy at the Fine Secolo", (PhD dissertation, University of Berkeley, California, 2014), 65-96.

Italian music by American markets.[102] If international tours by composers and singers sought to make the most of American audiences, opera recordings employed an inverse relationship. In a similar way, the presence of composers on tour might seek to insert authorial presence and sheer physicality back into a highly globalised musical culture; and yet these efforts were in perpetual tension with the gramophone's increasing success, and its American profile.

Against this context, it is striking that the only known (or suspected) evidence of contact between Puccini and the gramophone should have occurred precisely during this visit to New York. On 21 February 1907, Giacomo Puccini recorded a message for the Columbia Phonograph Company in their offices in New York, accompanied by his wife, Elvira, Victor H. Emerson – Columbia's chief recording engineer – and illustrator Gianni Viafora, who introduced Puccini as "the worthy successor to the great composers who have represented Italy and make Italy the world's leading exporter of the arts of music and singing". Puccini's message for the recording was brief, and perhaps suggested some uncertainty about the appropriate words for the occasion:

> My heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. Viafora, for your kind words. I am really deeply grateful to the great public of New York for the very enthusiastic welcome they have given my operas. I accept your wishes for a safe journey and conclude by cheering: America Forever![103]

Such sentiments were predictable enough in the circumstances and were followed by Elvira Puccini's own thanks for the warm welcome offered by New York's women. The existence of the recording might appear simply a technical novelty – a farewell gift to Puccini, perhaps, akin to the tin foil souvenirs offered to audiences at public exhibitions in the USA during recorded sound's emergence in the 1870s.[104] But as Viafora made clear, the recording was

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[102] In later years, Victor would exploit precisely this rhetoric to argue that recordings (including those of foreign music) could aid American nation-building: see *The Victrola in Americanization* (Camden, New Jersey: Educational Department, Victor Talking Machine Company, 1920).

[103] The original recording is in Italian. The complete recording is contained on *Puccini: My Voice and the Voice of my Singers* [CD-ROM] Fono Enterprise, 2004. Only Puccini's final two words are in English; the rest of the recording is in Italian. For further information on the disc's history, see William Shaman, Edward Joseph Smith, William J. Collins and Calvin M. Goodwin, *More EJS: Discography of the Edward J. Smith Recordings: "Unique Opera Recordings Corporation" (1972-1977), "A.N.N.A. Record Company (1978-1982), "special-label" Issues (circa 1954-1981), and Addendum to "The Golden Age of Opera" Series* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), 251-2. The disc appears never to have been commercially released during Puccini's lifetime, and a surviving copy held by the BBC appears itself to be a copy of an original; nor is the disc listed in Columbia's 1907 public catalogue. The recording's authenticity nonetheless seems clear: the Columbia matrix number places the recording around Puccini's visit. The Columbia Records paperwork collection held at the Library of Congress only starts from 1923 and therefore cannot shed further light on this topic.

[104] See Lisa Gitelman, "Souvenir Foils: On the Status of Print at the Origin of Recorded Sound" in *New Media: 1740-1915*, ed. Lisa Gitelman & Geoffrey B. Pingree (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 157-73.

destined to stay in New York, an audible memento of Puccini's presence to be enjoyed after the composer's departure back to Italy. "Today, more than 5,000 miles from Torre del Lago, where he finds so much poetic inspiration, Maestro Puccini will leave us with a recorded souvenir of his own voice" – the wonder of the phonograph moreover placed at a clear geographical and technological distance from the idyll of the composer's homeland.[105]

Expressing such sentiments through the gramophone offered an ideal match of medium and message. A statement of wonder at American civilisation was articulated through a new American technology; a desire for the endurance of American civilisation expressed, moreover, through a device celebrated for its power to preserve the voices of the living beyond death.[106] The allusion to *Madama Butterfly*, via Pinkerton's phrase "America Forever!" (from the Act One duet with Sharpless) was clearly topical in the circumstances. And yet, the allusion to Pinkerton inevitably also risked evoking a more negative set of associations, given the character's duplicitous morals and his association with exploitation. What sort of souvenir of Puccini's voice was this, that both praised and critiqued the environment in which it was being recorded for posterity?

For Columbia, the appeal of securing Puccini's voice for the catalogue was fairly self-evident. Having abandoned its programme of operatic recordings in 1903, the company had witnessed the rapid success of its rival, Victor, in marketing opera recordings featuring Metropolitan Opera stars, and in 1907 Columbia entered into a contract with the smaller Milan-based Finotipia company – which recorded a number of singers from the La Scala theatre – in order to issue their recordings in America.[107] The previous year, Columbia had also hired Guglielmo Marconi, famed as the inventor of the wireless, to act as its consulting physicist in New York and Connecticut, a professional relationship that soon floundered.[108] In 1910 Columbia would itself embark on a further series of opera discs using singers from Oscar Hammerstein's newly-opened Manhattan Opera Company, in a further attempt to corner a burgeoning market for opera recordings.[109] For Puccini, meanwhile, the gramophone

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[105] The disc is now available, appropriately enough, on sale at the museum shop of the Museo Giacomo Puccini de Torre del Lago.
[106] See Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), especially 287-351.
[107] On the "opera wars" between Victor and Columbia, see Allan Sutton, *A Phonograph in Every Home: The Evolution of the American Recording Industry, 1900-19* (Denver: Mainspring Press, 2010), 131-41.
[108] Marconi's involvement nonetheless fed into advertisements published by Columbia in the Italian émigré press: see *L'araldo italiano*, 20 January 1907.
[109] See Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph,* 130-57 on the rivalry between Columbia and Victor records, and Columbia's business arrangements with Fonotipia. Gelatt notes that the American-issued Fonotipia recordings failed to dent Victor's success, as customers complained about inferior sound quality (154-5).

seems to have occupied a largely negative position. Given one by his sister, he referred to it as the scratchophone, despite his love of new gadgetry; and he later crudely dismissed Asian interpreters of *Butterfly* as possessing "'gramophone' voices".[110]

Considered in this context, Puccini's visit to the Columbia studios might seem less a light-hearted stunt than a brazen attempt to stake a claim for composers as central to the industry. Predictable and bland though most of Puccini's message was, the message could both appear a coronation of the technology (as far as Columbia were concerned), and an assertion of the composer's rights by Puccini, rights identified with the composer's own voice. Already at *Butterfly*'s first Italian performances, however, the gramophone industry had begun to further a pre-existing image of the USA as a problematic centre of Italian cultural activity – a place that offered a new home for Italian opera and Italian culture, and yet also seemed primed to exploit it. If Puccini's own New York tour sought to re-set the composer's tarnished reputation (and to line his pockets), the gramophone offered a worrying counter-push to such efforts, by repackaging Italian voices in a new aesthetic form.

Puccini's gramophone message might, then, suggest itself as a surprising hermeneutic tool for exploring *Butterfly*'s own depiction of intercultural conflict: one imbricated with the disc's own medium. *Butterfly* might, in other words, be approached as an opera itself deeply (and topically) concerned with vocality and human presence, and the false promise of the American world. Puccini's adaptation of Belasco's play in that sense hints at a complex intertwining of American and Italian self-representations; rather than just an auditory carte-visite, Puccini's message could proffer some explicitly topical associations for the composer's tragedy of exploitation and unfulfilled promises. And in order to explore such an idea further, we need to return to the sonorous Butterfly with which this chapter began, and to retrace some of the key moments in Puccini's acoustic dramaturgy.

Italian Butterflies

Belasco's decision to title his play "Madama Butterfly" was a provocative one; as was Puccini, Giocosa and Illica's decision to retain it. Butterfly collecting had become a widespread North American hobby in the years following the American Civil War, as an older European passion for collecting exotic species (and in turn creating museum archives)

[110] Vincent Seligman, *Puccini Among Friends* (New York: Macmillan, 1938): letter dated 13 June 1915.

spread across the Atlantic.[111] The Museum of Natural History in New York contained over 10,000 species of European and American butterflies when it opened in 1871.[112] The ethics of killing butterflies for scientific preservation and study had long been a cause of dispute, however, and by 1900 the hobby had started to retreat in favour of newer amusements and in response to ecological damage. Imagining an intercultural encounter in the language of lepidoptery was thus a metaphor fraught with destructive colonial resonances, that framed both activities as essentially possessive and murderous. It was also an image that became central to *Madama Butterfly*'s dramaturgy, above all in the central encounter between Butterfly and her American husband.

The Act Two humming scene is hardly unique in its foregrounding of seductive vocality in *Butterfly*. Indeed, its use of sopranos and tenors, and its largely diatonic harmony suggest a clear reminder of the duet between Butterfly and Pinkerton that closes Act One. In contrast to the later scene, this love duet had come in for especial criticism in the first Milanese reviews, with numerous writers denouncing it for being overly derivative of Rodolfo and Mimì's first duet in *Bohème*. Tormented by the cries of her departing family, Butterfly takes refuge in Pinkerton's embrace as evening draws in (the keys of E flat, B flat and F major clearly related to the humming scene) and she commences "Vogliatemi bene" with similar stepwise movements; the solo violin and harp create a comparably delicate atmosphere. This is the opera's most explicit moment of unity between the two characters, as their vocal lines are drawn closely together, and they eventually sing in unison to the melody that had first announced Butterfly's arrival on stage with her friends. That first appearance of Butterfly earlier in the opera was in fact presented precisely in the allure of offstage arrival, and experienced from Pinkerton's perspective: floating above the offstage sopranos, Butterfly's voice gradually draws closer to the stage as it rises ever higher, translating the arrival of physical presence into a highly eroticised encounter that foreshadows the end of the Act One. Butterfly's opening lines developed from short melodic fragments into a sustained melody, as though arrival at the house had given her the confidence finally to sing out. The overall trajectory of the entire act, indeed, can be understood as the gradual collapse of physical distance: the sliding screens of Butterfly's house moving to reveal the bedroom within; Butterfly ascending the hill to greet the bridal party; and Pinkerton's closing seduction. The movement from the opening fugal imitation to the expectant syncopation of

[111] See William Leach, *Butterfly People: An American Encounter with the Beauty of the World* (London: Penguin Random House, 2013).
[112] Cited in Beckert, *Monied Metropolis*, 271.

"Vogliatemi bene" effects a similar transition, as the music's lyricism eventually collapses Butterfly and Pinkerton's voice into one, and physical distance is largely erased. The opening act underlines Butterfly's environment and the character herself as characterised by gradual disrobement: sexual intimacy and sonic immediacy are the act's final destination, and Butterfly is its focal point.

Stage-managed display – or more negatively, voyeurism – are thus at the centre of the Act One duet. As Butterfly's final lines in the love duet make clear, this is a scene at some level even imagined for an audience: the shining stars are peculiarly imagined as eyes, a gazing audience to whom Butterfly and Pinkerton theatrically act out their union of bodies as night settles around them.[113] Butterfly's self-presentation, one should add, is also blatantly orientalist in this scene. Describing herself as from a race of people used to "little things", she contrasts her identity with the strength and ease of Americans. A sense of anxiety nevertheless also colours passages of this duet, as Butterfly's demands for care are contrasted with Pinkerton's violent assertions of control – statements of possession that moreover come couched in the language of preservation, and that unsettle the anticipated physical union:

Butterfly	**Pinkerton**
Dicon ch'oltre mare	Un po' di vero c'è.
se cade in man dell'uom,	E tu lo sai perché?
ogni farfarla	Perché non fugga più.
d'uno spillo è trafitta, ed in tavola infitta!..	Io t'ho ghermita.
	Ti serro palpitante. Sei mia.

[**Butterfly**: They say that in other lands, if a butterfly falls into a man's hands, she is fixed with a pin, and fastened to a board! **Pinkerton**: There's some truth in that, and do you know why? So that she will not fly away. I've caught you. I press you trembling to me. You're mine.]

As Butterfly expresses her fears of being destroyed by Pinkerton, an echo of the curse uttered by her uncle, the Bonze, at the wedding comes to haunt her in the F sharp and G sharp of her vocal line – foreshadowing the abandonment she will eventually face by both Japanese and American cultures in her life, leaving her with few choices other than suicide. Butterfly's questioning at the same time reintroduces some of the rhetoric that Pinkerton had deployed in

[113] "Ah! Quanti occhi fissi, attenti! Quanti sguardi […] Ride il ciel!" ["Ah! So many fixed eyes, watching! How many looking! […] The sky is smiling!" declares Butterfly in the duet's closing moments, against Pinkerton's cries of "Ah, vien!". Quotations and translations from the libretto are taken from Mosco Carner, *Madam Butterfly: A Guide to the Opera* (London: Breslich & Foss, 1979), 87-153 (libretto translations by Charles Osborne).

the moments immediately before Butterfly's arrival in Act One: the comparison between Butterfly and painted glass and ornamental objects, and whose delicate wings may be crushed through an over-zealous embrace (see Ex. 3.3).[114] For Pinkerton, in fact, Butterfly had already been imagined as a preserved aesthetic object or insect, one fixed in lacquer who has freed herself only to be captured again by his fierce embrace. Butterfly's remarks develop this language even further, transforming it explicitly into the images of lepidoptery. These lines have no direct equivalent in either Long's story or Belasco's play, but the imagery was clearly topical in both early-twentieth century Italy and the USA. The desire to preserve ephemeral beauty is tied to violence; Pinkerton's urge to possess Butterfly appears to promise intimacy, but ultimately destroys, creating the distance it promised to overcome.

The similarities between the language of butterfly collecting (and killing), and that of the gramophone invite a further perspective on Butterfly and Pinkerton's relationship. The early gramophone was, after all, frequently touted as a vehicle for rescuing musical voices on the verge of extinction – a colonial endeavour that justified the encroachment on non-Western territories through the preservation of perishable sounds.[115] Puccini was reportedly given phonograph recordings of Japanese folk music while preparing the score of *Butterfly*, although live performances and scores appear to have been more significant, and recent scholarship has revealed the limited extent of Puccini's Japanese borrowings.[116] Even more topically, the shellac used to create early gramophone discs was created from insects: precisely the kind of preservative lacquer that Pinkerton imagines Butterfly being trapped in.[117]

The butterfly likewise has its own rich legacy as a metaphor of poetic thought and subjectivity dating back to Aristotle. For Wordsworth, the butterfly figured as a symbol of nature's fecundity and beauty; for Mallarmé, as a symbol of creativity and life itself, one he

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[114] Pinkerton comments to Sharpless, "Lieve qual tenue vetro soffiato alla statura, al portamento, sembra figura da paravento. Ma dal suo lucido fondo di lacca come con subito moto si stacca, qual farfalletta svollaza e posa con tal grazietta silenziosa che di rincorrerla furor m'assale, se pure infrangerne dovessi l'ale" ["Light and slender as a piece of blown glass, in stature, in bearing, she's like a figure on a painted screen. But from her glittering background of lacquer, with a sudden movement she frees herself, flutters like a butterfly and comes to rest with such silent grace that a sudden desire seizes me to pursue her, though I may crush her wings."]
[115] Jonathan Sterne outlines this in relation to native Americans: see *The Audible Past*, 311-33.
[116] W. Anthony Sheppard, "Puccini and the Music Boxes", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 140/1 (2015), 41-92. As Sheppard demonstrates, two of the opera's key themes – one associated with Butterfly, the other with her family – were in fact of Chinese origin and were mediated to Puccini via Swiss music boxes.
[117] On insects and early sound recordings, see Gavin Williams, "Shellac, Colonial Ecology, and Haptic Desire in Early Recorded Sound", conference paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, San Antonio, 2018.

sought to enact by writing poems on decorative fans inspired by the East.[118] Schumann's proclivity for butterfly imagery – via Jean-Paul – is well-known to musicologists; Dickinson similarly returned to the image in several poetic works. The butterfly has likewise proved useful as a metaphor in later accounts of new media technologies. "When we define the Photograph as a motionless image, this does not mean only that the figures it represents do not move", commented Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*; "it means that they do not *emerge*, do not *leave*: they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies."[119] While there is no evidence that Puccini or his librettists were aware of specific uses of such imagery (and Barthes's writings clearly post-date both Belasco's play and *Butterfly*), fixing a butterfly with a pin was nonetheless an image heavy with cultural meaning: one that suggested not merely cultural appropriation or exploitation, but also the entrapment of creativity and the human soul for posterity and the purposes of (typically male) enjoyment.

Butterfly's exchange with Pinkerton has become a familiar reference point for feminist readings of *Butterfly*, that have rightly highlighted the misogynistic behaviour of Pinkerton and its legacy in the opera's reception history. As Susan McClary observes, the imagery of impaling Butterfly with a pin can be heard as a non-too-subtle symbol of sexual penetration, that foreshadows Butterfly's later piercing of herself with a dagger.[120] Expanding upon Catherine Clément's familiar interpretation of the opera, McClary frames the insertion of this seduction scene into the opera's plot as an invitation for voyeuristic pleasure – the vocal lines pushing Butterfly ever-higher as she slowly submits to Pinkerton's advances, in an episode that reproduces colonial and misogynist ideologies. Counter-arguments to such readings centred on the sheer strength of the female operatic voice are by now well-known and need not be recounted here.[121] A more recent study by Judy Tsou, meanwhile, has critiqued the opera via an examination of the differing tonal strategies for Western and Eastern characters, describing Butterfly as "Asian, female, fragile, powerless, and therefore, voiceless […] she sings mostly modern music, a tonal distinction meant to convey the misunderstood, unheard, and powerless nature of her voice."[122] Puccini's experiments with

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[118] William Wordsworth, "To a butterfly", *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807); on Mallarmé, see Yulia Ryhzik, "Books, Fans, and Mallarmé's Butterfly", *PMLA* 26/3 (2011), 625-43.
[119] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981; French edition, 1980), 57.
[120] Susan McClary, "Mounting Butterflies", in *A Vision of the Orient,* 21-35.
[121] The classic account remains Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women", in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 225-58.
[122] Judy Tsou, "Composing racial difference in *Madama Butterfly*"; here 223. Tsou's stimulating observations on the differing tonal profiles of the characters, I would argue, is nonetheless compromised by an overly-

sound in *Butterfly* may at least complicate such readings, however, by emphasising Butterfly's association with a specifically acoustic form of physical presence. More broadly, they situate Butterfly and Pinkerton's interaction within a wider discourse about live performance and acoustic mediation, a discourse that was moreover played out on explicitly national terms. If *Butterfly* can be heard as an opera ultimately reinforcing some of the most bigoted ideologies of the *fine secolo*, it nevertheless does so by generating an auditory landscape in which voice and presence – agency *through* voice – are precisely the issues at stake.

As Tsou notes, Butterfly's absence of an entrance aria or individual arrival differentiates her significantly from Mimì or Tosca. The offstage female chorus instead situate Butterfly's voice as part of a rich visual and auditory tapestry – the references to the breadth of the sky and sea (evoked through augmented fifths and rising sequences) eventually being recapitulated in the love duet, and the bells, harp and strings suggesting that the Japanese landscape is itself inherently musical.[123] Butterfly's physical arrival on stage is nonetheless the climax of this arrival: "appaiono in scena" [they appear on stage] at the episode's final cadence, the score notes, and Butterfly's voice soars uniquely to an optional high D flat (see Ex. 3.2). Rather than being without a voice, in fact, Butterfly's voice appears amplified by her friends and surroundings, as though she were the vehicle through which the scene's soundscape is generated.[124] Pinkerton's own entrance aria, by contrast, is strikingly brusque and out-of-tune with its environs. A four-square melody marked by wide leaps, the martial quality of "Dovunque al mondo" anticipates Rinuccio's aria in *Gianni Schicchi* (1918), and the incorporation of "The Star Spangled Banner" further emphasises the triumphalist, self-regarding tone. The preceding music similarly grinds to a halt for Pinkerton's declaration of freedom, in contrast to the voices of Butterfly's friends that emerge seamlessly out of the musical fabric.

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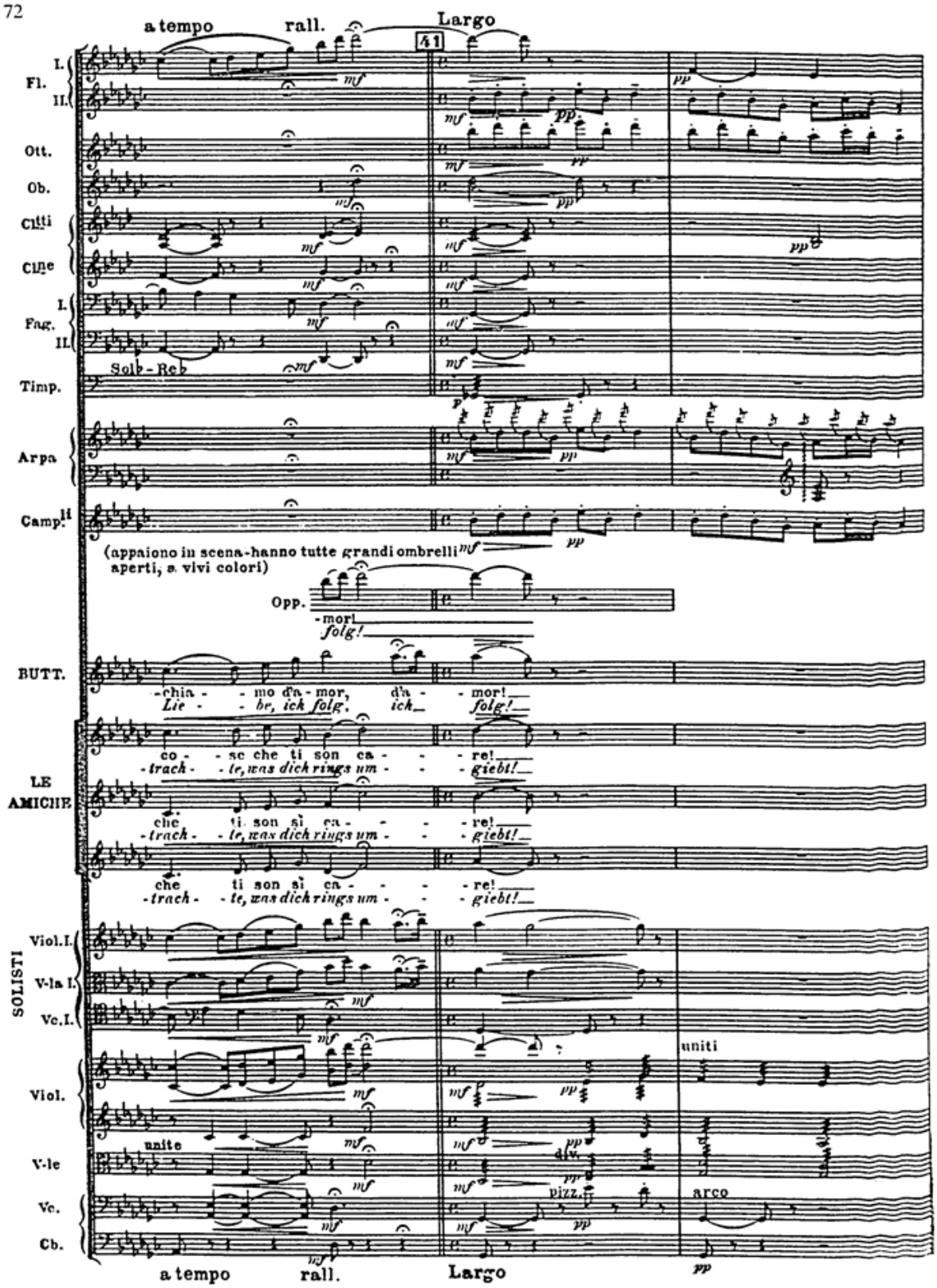
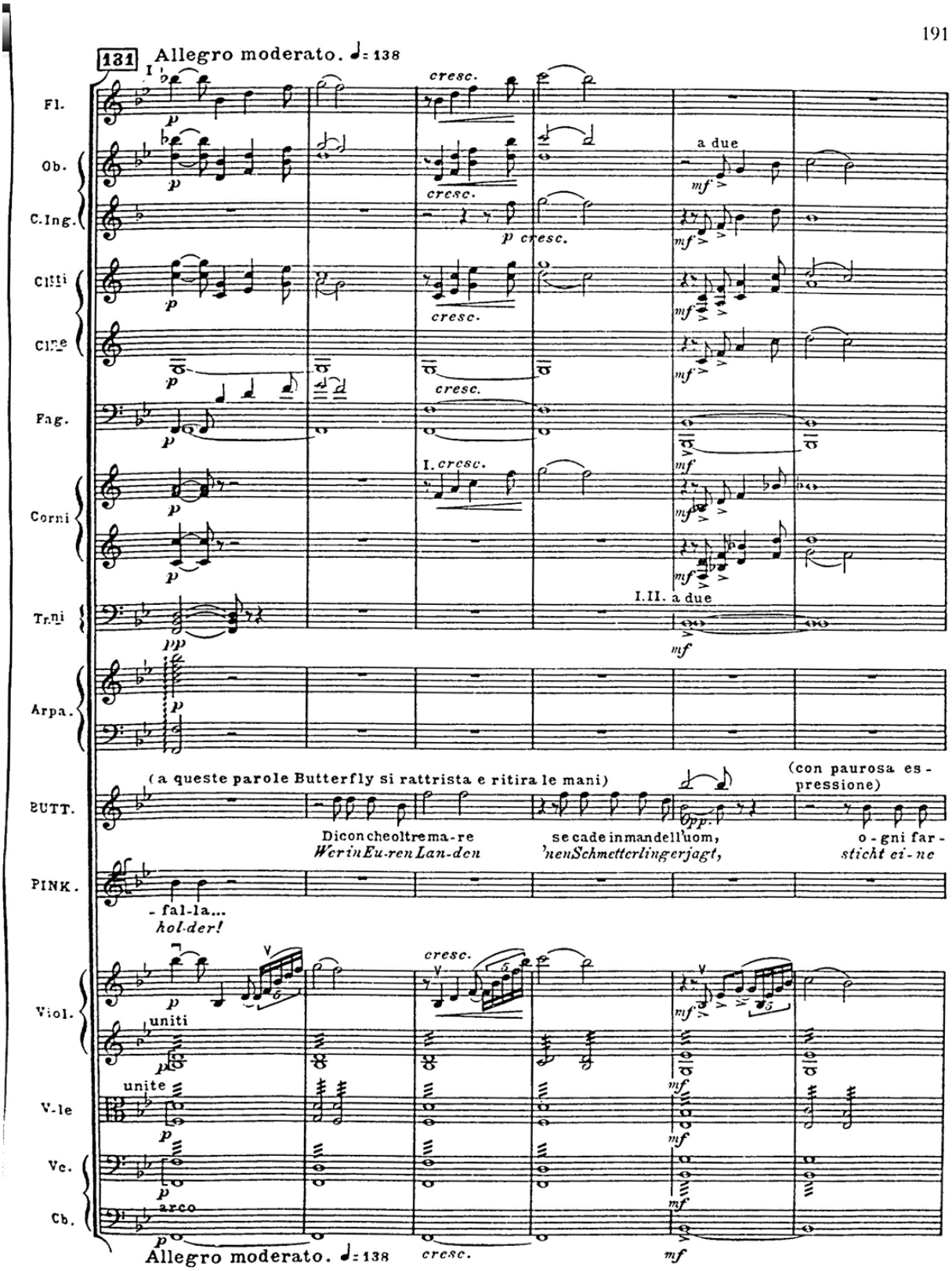
simplistic distinction between "Italian" and "modern" music as understood by Puccini's contemporaries, particularly in light of Puccini's subsequent, harmonically-experimental works. For a more recent, and subtler account of Butterfly's complex position between East and West, see Arthur Groos, "*Madama Butterfly* Between East and West".

[123] Tsou observes in response to the chorus's lines, that in Japanese culture nature and music are indeed linked, although she finds it unlikely that Puccini would have been aware of such an association. Ibid., 224.

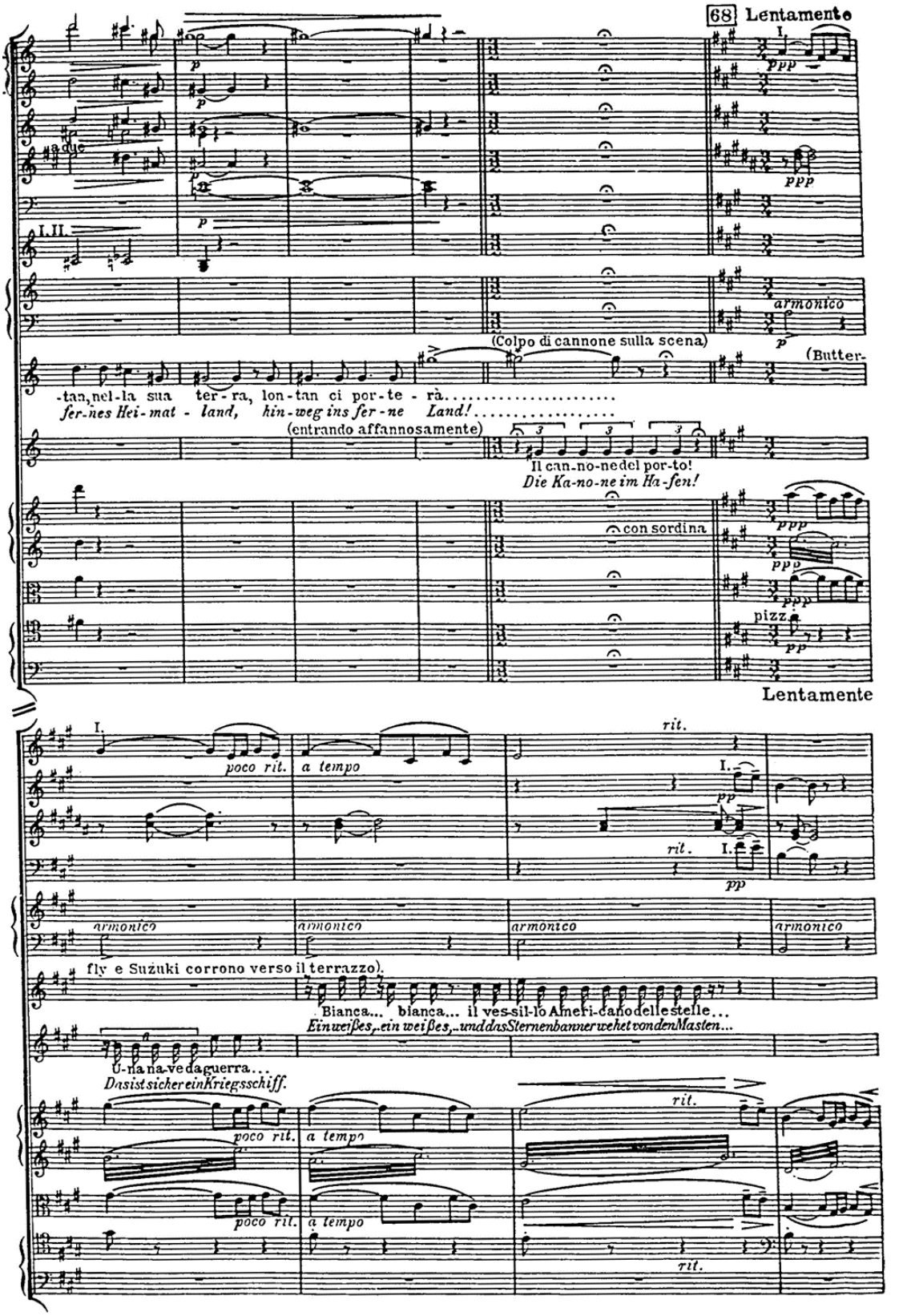
[124] As Julian Budden comments, "by allowing her voice to emerge from what is essentially a tone-picture [Puccini] achieved a perfect fusion of 'Ausdruck der Empfindung' with 'Malerei'". Julian Budden, *Puccini: His Life and Works*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 248.



Ex. 3.2. Butterfly's entrance, Act One, *Madama Butterfly*, Ricordi 1907 edition



Ex. 3.3. Act One duet, *Madama Butterfly*, Ricordi 1907 edition



Ex. 3.4. Pinkerton's arrival, Act Two, *Madama Butterfly*, Ricordi 1907 edition

Butterfly is not an unselfconscious performer, however. A similar disruption of the musical flow does in fact occur early in Act Two, when Butterfly prophesies the return of Pinkerton in "Un bel dì, vedremo". The score instructs the singer to act out the scene 'as though it were really happening', and the aria thus functions as a piece of covert diegetic music: one in which Butterfly reveals not numinous insights into her own plot, but rather the depths of her fantasy. A former geisha, Butterfly sings when she wishes to convey wisdom, and cautions Suzuki to listen carefully: "Senti". Crucially, Butterfly's dream of Pinkerton's return is imagined not primarily in visual terms, but rather in sonic ones. First the ship is signalled by a wisp of smoke in the distance, far in the horizon, a moment that Puccini paints through music for violins, woodwind and harp unsupported by a bass. Then the ship will offer a thunderous salute, to announce its arrival, Butterfly argues; and then Butterfly will hear Pinkerton calling from the distance. Sung in the soprano's lower register, Pinkerton's calling of her name is notably erotic, as though the imagined voice were already comparable to physical contact. Finally, Butterfly will hide from his sight in excitement, she declares (as the opening music of the aria is recapitulated in a further fantasy of return), and he will continue to call Butterfly affectionate nicknames in order to entice her to come forward. Strangely, this is the point at which Butterfly's fantasy ends: the physical presence of the voice is a sufficient signifier of human contact, she implies, and Butterfly will continue waiting faithfully for that auditory moment to happen. This is indeed largely what occurs. Pinkerton's arrival is signalled by a "colpo di cannone sulla scena", that prompts a mystical, *pianissimo* echo of "Un bel dì, vedremo" in the orchestra, as though Butterfly's fantasy were still being lived out: sound is enough to reanimate the dream (see Ex. 3.4).

As Butterfly's fantasy world unravels, these key moments in her aria are painfully enacted, concluding with Pinkerton's final offstage cries of "Butterfly!". Only at the end, and too late, does Pinkerton echo Butterfly's initial offstage arrival (now reinforced by *fortissimo* tremolo strings, roaring out the curse motif) and subsequent physical appearance. Yet the crucial episode in the opera's final moments, I would suggest, is rather her farewell to her child. This addition created by Puccini, Illica and Giacosa is significant not just for its display of maternal affection, but for the ways in which Butterfly chooses to articulate and theatrically perform her message:

Butterfly: O a me, sceso dal trono	O, my own, descended from the throne
Dell'alto Paradiso,	of high Paradise,
Guardo ben fiso, fiso	Look carefully, on your

di tua madre la faccia,	mother's face,
che ten'resti una traccia,	so that you may keep a memory
guarda ben!	of it, look carefully!

Clutching the child close to her, Butterfly's departing message appears to be for voice and body, sound and sight to be perpetually aligned in her child's memory: not merely hearing her message, nor gazing at her face, but doing both simultaneously. Rather than simply a maternal goodbye, this final scene is notable also for the way in which Butterfly seeks to stage her death. Butterfly offers a final moment of quasi-diegetic performance as she bids farewell to her child, one that she does in hiding from Pinkerton as she had earlier prophesied. Taking on the most dramatic phrases in the entire role (as the singer's voice is pummelled by heavy brass) Butterfly in fact seems to foreshadow Turandot – Puccini's later Asian heroine, who is herself haunted by the voice of an ancestor.

If this final scene might be considered the most explicit moment of non-exoticism in Butterfly's vocal portrait – a symbol of strength in which pentatonicism and modalism are now abandoned – then it is also one that foregrounds explicitly the desire for physical and sensory wholeness, and one that highlights Butterfly's autonomy through the act of performance.[125] Rejecting Pinkerton's Americanism, Butterfly instead espouses a worldview rooted in the immediacy of the human voice. The offstage sounds in the opera – cannons, nightingales, Butterfly herself – are all predicated on the expectation of physical arrival. Without this, it would seem, an acoustic promise has been broken, and the result is a kind of death. Crucially, such concerns here seem to be played out in a specifically geographical way: it is the USA that disrupts the union between voices and bodies, one here exotically imagined through an Eastern land of music that is also explicitly feminised.

Made in Italy

An interpretation of *Madama Butterfly* on these terms, I would argue, can ultimately open up new perspectives on both Puccini's work, and the musical relations between Italy and America at this time. Interpreted in the context of Puccini's other works, *Butterfly* offers an especially pessimistic attitude towards offstage sound, presented here as fundamentally

[125] For some thoughts in this vein, see Roger Parker's brief article "One fine obscenity": https://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/feb/13/classicalmusicandopera.reviews, accessed 30 May 2018.

deceptive. Butterfly's hopes for return are perpetually delayed, until the final arrival of Pinkerton is associated with her death. In the context of contemporary negative depictions of America, moreover, *Butterfly* offers a specifically musical and sound-based perspective – one in which America is itself identified with new forms of acousmatic listening, ones that threaten to undo not only normative ways of listening, but even normative ways of living. If experiments with offstage sound and the staging of distance are hardly unique to *Butterfly*, the opera reworks these familiar concerns through a narrative concerned specifically with cultural conflict, and in the context of shifting attitudes towards operatic performance in Italy and the USA.[126]

This reading inevitably emerges in dialogue with historical sources rather than directly from them; and the reader may well question whether Puccini (and Italy) should be so easily conflated with Butterfly and Japan. Puccini's affection for the opera, and *Butterfly*'s continued popularity as a diva vehicle for Italian sopranos, certainly do both reinforce a reading of the opera as a reflection on Italian modernity as well as Orientalist fantasy, however important the latter perspective undoubtedly has been in the opera's reception, and however problematic a simple equation of Puccini's views and *Butterfly*'s dramaturgy is on numerous levels. Perceptions of both Puccini's musical style and *Butterfly* itself as feminine and quintessentially Italian likewise emerge from both Italian and American press reports, ideas that were echoed in a range of other Italian and foreign discourses both before and after *Butterfly*'s 1904 premiere. "*Madama Butterfly* is certainly framed with Japanese lacquer and held together with American resin, but does its core really give the sensation of the Far East seen through Butterfly's little house?", asked one dismissive Milanese critic. "In appearance we seem to be in Japan but in substance Puccini has returned to the Parisian atmosphere of *Bohème*, the Roman atmosphere of *Tosca*, the Franco-American atmosphere of *Manon*."[127] Puccini's image as the composer of "little sketches", and Butterfly's claim to be from a race accustomed to "little things" offers a further historical connection. And yet, more sympathetic attitudes towards America and the gramophone can certainly also be found around Puccini's opera. Puccini's periodic use of realist sound effects in *Butterfly* – notably the birdsong after the humming scene – does suggest a more ambivalent attitude towards phonographic sound; and it is certainly true that Puccini was also willing to licence the use of his music for some gramophone recordings. The later addition of an Act Two aria for Pinkerton likewise presents

[126] See again Schwartz, *Puccini's Soundscapes*, 48-52.
[127] Romeo Carugati, *La Lombardia*, 18 February 1904, cited in Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 114.

the American world in a more flattering light than the 1904 version. Yet the overall dramaturgy of *Butterfly*, I would argue, does offer a sustained opposition between two acoustic worlds: an exploitative American modernity, and an exoticised Japan that echoes familiar ideas of Italian vocality, femininity and naïve tradition. The intersections between *Butterfly* and wider operatic discourses – even the points of tension between the two – can ultimately illuminate the complex interplay of attraction and repulsion, hope and fear, that surrounded the American operatic dream within Italy.

Resituating *Butterfly* within Puccini's own transatlantic relations can also offer an important reminder of the transnational encounters that defined familiar ideas of Italian vocality at this time. Puccini's New York tour might have financially benefited both him and the Met; but it also shaped perceptions of Puccini's standing as a typically Italian composer, and highlighted the ongoing desire for physical presence in a transatlantic musical culture. The gramophone industry, meanwhile, seemed to promise that Italian voices would be mediated by American technology, offering new forms of acousmatic sound that pushed composers – and Italy – ever further out of the musical limelight. Puccini's *Butterfly* tours brought such concerns together around an opera that itself stages a conflict between technological modernity and an archaic, performing voice: a scenario that engages with changing power relations and modes of musical consumption, and the status of the Italian voice.

Perhaps finally, then, one might turn to the recordings and images that survive of Storchio and Farrar's Butterflys, to ask what traces of Italy reside within these fragments. For both singers, the visual presentation of Butterfly is predictable: the fan, kimono and screen are reminiscent of hundreds of later *Butterfly* productions. Storchio is frequently photographed kneeling with hands clasped together, the obedient poses implied by much of the first act. Farrar instead favours an arch stare at the camera, a choice that chimes with Puccini's complaints of her performance as energetic and overly vulgar. Storchio's interpretation was sadly never recorded; press accounts and letters tend to be restricted to remarks on her grace and sincerity in the role. Farrar's recorded voice, meanwhile, offers few startling orientalist gestures (discernable through the fizz and crackle). The childlike sounds associated with certain later performers of the role are hardly to be found; the exoticisms, one suspects, were primarily visual in effect. Listening to the voice alone, in fact, ideas of Butterfly's indelibly Japanese identity might instead briefly slip away, in favour of a more

familiar presentation; that of an Italian stage figure who “lives, rejoices, suffers and dies from love”.

Chapter Four

Italians Abroad: *La traviata* and the 1906 Milan Exposition

On 27 January 1906 – a characteristically cold, foggy winter's day in Milan – the fifth anniversary of Verdi's death was doubly commemorated by the La Scala company. In the morning, a funeral mass was performed at the Casa di Riposo per Musicisti – the retirement home for musicians founded by Verdi a decade earlier – featuring a selection of the composer's sacred and operatic works, and attended by various local musical luminaries and civic representatives.[1] And in the evening, a new production premiered at La Scala of Verdi's by-then classic opera *La traviata* (1853). By 1906, such acts of public homage were becoming remarkably common.[2] The composer's death in Milan in 1901 had already been marked by several collective acts of remembrance, including the decision to construct a monument to the composer in Parma; and as the fifth anniversary approached, commemorations were moreover taking place well beyond the borders of Italy.[3] *Il progresso italo-americano*'s long-running plans to erect a monument to the composer were finally coming to fruition in New York, for example, while in Trieste a statue of Verdi was unveiled on the day itself.[4] Nor was it merely the composer himself who was being honoured with anniversary celebrations. The fiftieth anniversary of *La traviata*'s premiere had been marked in February 1903 with a series of performances at Paris's Opéra-Comique, starring Mary Garden – believed to be the first in the 1840s setting originally imagined for the opera by Verdi, before the intervention of censors had moved the action to the early eighteenth century.[5]

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[1] For more details on the funeral mass, see *Il secolo*, 28 January 1906. Works performed included extracts from the *Messa da Requiem* (1874) and *I vespri siciliani* (1855).

[2] Verdi's posthumous history as a focal point for Italian national (and local) celebrations has been the subject of several recent articles: see Harriet Boyd-Bennett, "Excavating Attila: Verdi 'Allor che i forti corrono' (Odabella), *Attila*, Act 1", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 28/2 (2016), 167-70; and Laura Basini, "Cults of Sacred Memory: Parma and the Verdi Centennial Celebrations of 1913", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13/2 (2001), 141-61.

[3] On the monument, see also Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans: From Unification to the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135; on Verdi's death, see Gavin Williams, "Orating Verdi: Death and the Media, *c*1901", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 23/3 (2011), 119-43. The Parma monument was funded by an international consortium of donors.

[4] *Il mondo artistico*, 1 February 1906, 6. Trieste was at this point still under Hapsburg control, and an irredentist heartland: see Maura Elise Hametz, *Making Trieste Italian, 1918-54* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005).

[5] On the Paris production, see Michela Niccolai, ""Une mise en scène ingénieusement élegante": Albert Carré et *La traviata* à l'Opéra-comique (12 février 1903)", in *Verdi Reception*, ed. Lorenzo Frassà & Michela Niccolai (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 287-304. Alexandre Dumas's novel *La Dame aux Camélias* was published in 1848, with the stage play (created by Dumas himself) premiering in 1852; Verdi's opera followed a year later.

If the Parisian performances of *La traviata* could in some way be imagined as a return home for La Dame aux Camélias, the Opéra-Comique was not alone in staking a special claim to Verdi's opera, however. The 1906 production at La Scala likewise updated the opera from the usual *c*1700 setting to the 1840s, and was hailed as one of the greatest successes at the theatre in recent years; even an "apotheosis" of Verdi, in the words of one effusive local critic.[6] The production was quickly revived for the opening of Milan's Universal Exposition later that spring, and was again acclaimed as a triumph, at a moment of intense national and international media attention on the city.[7] At once a welcome revival of a canonic opera not seen at La Scala for several seasons, and a striking updating of the work's scenic dimensions, this was a *Traviata* that offered audiences something both old and new: a presentation of the opera as initially imagined – yet never witnessed – by the composer himself; and an exhumation of the Verdian spirit that also offered a decisive step away from the composer's own theatrical practice.[8]

Explanations for the production's extraordinary success might extend beyond the well-established popularity of Verdi's score (and the quality of the musical performances) and consider a more topical set of associations. The La Scala production at one level clearly bore witness to Milan's long-standing fascination with Paris: the most familiar of operatic reference points by the early twentieth century, as well as the paradigmatic modern city staged in Verdi's opera. At the same time, more recent operatic centres could be invoked to account for the production's remarkable contemporary power. Both the production's conductor, Leopoldo Mugnone – a former colleague of Verdi – and its Violetta, Rosina Storchio, were by then renowned for their regular operatic tours to South America.[9] Buenos Aires in particular had become the site of notable triumphs for both conductor and soprano: Mugnone was then director of the Circolo Italiano institute there, in which capacity he had helped to arrange Puccini's two-month tour the previous year, including conducting the

[6] "Con la prima della *Traviata* la direzione della Scala offriva al pubblico, per cosi dire, la plataforma di un apoteosi a Verdi nel quinto anniversario di sua morte"; *Lega Lombardia*, 28 January 1906.
[7] *La traviata* was revived on 17 April 1906, the first of a series of operas presented around the opening of the Exposition. Correspondence between the Exposition's executive committee and the La Scala management records the ambition on the part of the former to stage a suitable festival of works around the opening of the Exposition. See "Faldone N 1906: Concerti e ricevimenti in occasione della Esposizione Internazionale e delle Feste per l'inaugurazione del valico del Sempione (28 documenti)". Archivio Storico Ricordi.
[8] Verdi's original plans to set the opera in the 1840s had by the premiere been replaced an early eighteenth-century setting due to censorship reasons; Verdi never reverted to his initial intentions. See Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Verdi: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 321. The 1906 Milan production is mentioned in Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 329, and Rene Weis, *The Real Traviata: The Song of Marie Duplessis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 302.
[9] Mugnone also conducted the funeral mass on 27 January 1906.

revised version of *Edgar*. Storchio had likewise enjoyed major successes in the Argentine capital in recent seasons, especially in the revised version of *Madama Butterfly* that she presented together with Arturo Toscanini shortly after its disastrous world premiere.[10] While the Argentine achievements of La Scala's prima donna and a revered Italian conductor were celebrated in the Milanese press, Storchio and Mugnone's tours also highlighted the shifting operatic relationship between Milan and Buenos Aires in recent decades – one that intersected with broader anxieties about emigration rates to South America.[11] This demographic situation had by 1906 long raised grave questions about Italy's cultural and economic unity since political unification, while facilitating the circulation of a diverse range of conceptions of *italianità* far beyond Italy.

The La Scala *Traviata* of 1906 might therefore be productively situated within a complex set of wider debates in Milan: both about the future of Italian opera and its canon, and more generally about the relationship between Italian identity and geography. Indeed, the production can itself be figured as a powerful embodiment of contemporary questions about Italy's (and Italian opera's) global position. Its premiere around the opening of the Milan Exposition at the same time discloses a complex intersection of operatic and urban discourses – a moment when Italian opera's status as a global signifier of Italian identity was juxtaposed with efforts to present Milan as a globalised urban centre. If the 1906 *Traviata* might seem to offer an unambiguously local, even parochial celebration of a native composer, its performance in the context of the flamboyantly international Exposition invites a more far-sighted assessment of the production's unusual power.

In what follows, I examine the production in relation to broader musical developments around La Scala by 1906, as well as the widespread public interest regarding Argentina in Milan at this time. The *Traviata* production therefore initially remains in the distance, as I place the production and its reception within the specific context of the Exposition that occasioned its revival, and that notably featured a pavilion dedicated to "Italians Abroad". I consider the production within an ongoing critical discussion about the consequences of Italian music's global circulation for Italy's musical identity, as well as the

[10] On *Butterfly*'s Argentine success, see for example "Arte y Teatros", *La Prensa*, 3 July 1904; on Storchio and Toscanini's visit to Buenos Aires in 1904, see also "Notizie teatrali", *Corriere della sera*, 3 May 1904, 3. Tito Ricordi wrote to Puccini on 4 July 1904 to report on *Butterfly*'s reception in Buenos Aires, arguing that "it's like this that it takes a little step forward!" ["E così si fa ancora un piccolo passo alla dietro!": https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/letter/display/CLET000996, accessed 2 February 2019.
[11] On Storchio's career, see Daniele Rubboli, *Rosina Storchio: La musa della giovane scuola* (Dello: Museo Rosina Storchio, 1994).

changing character of Milan's musical life; before addressing some of the parallels between the Exposition's topography and the production's own temporal and geographical markers. Such similarities, I want to suggest, can usefully alert us to the connections between the exposition space and the opera house, in their attempted construction of compressed versions of "modern" urban reality. In so doing, they can perhaps also bring us closer to the shifting nature of operatic experience in Milan by the early twentieth century, at a time of rapidly changing transatlantic relations.

"Italia: Avanti!"[12]

The 1906 Milan Exposition was the first Universal Exposition held in Italy and was on an extraordinary scale.[13] Running for six and a half months between April and November, it was conceived to celebrate the completion of the Simplon Tunnel connecting Italy and Switzerland through the Alps, and hence – in line with many previous international exhibitions in Europe and the United States – was explicitly intended to demonstrate the city's technological prowess, and its quintessentially modern connections with other urban centres.[14] As Tullio Panteo argued in the theatrical journal *Ars et labor,* while the 1881 Milan Exhibition had been the revelation of Milan as a commercial and agricultural centre, 1906 signified "the solemn intention to compete with the most illustrious cities of the whole world; to victoriously assert itself victoriously equal to them, at the very least; to match them all in skill, at the very least", an ambition received by "all the civilised world in an act of homage".[15] Other writers were more belligerent, drawing attention to Milan's long history of foreign occupation: "[the Exposition] will perhaps be the beginning of a new historical epoch of this city, after centuries of foreign servitude […] ruined, destroyed by violence, dominated

[12] *Il sole*, headline, 28 April 1906.
[13] Universal Expositions were familiar events by 1906, that since London's famed Crystal Palace in 1851 had brought together pavilions presented by different nations to display the latest industrial innovations. Official accounts record the size of the Milan Exposition as over one million square metres; estimates of visitor number vary between four and ten million. On Italian expositions more generally, see Cristina Della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style: The Great Exhibitions in Turin and Their Narratives, 1860-1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).
[14] The Exposition had in fact been planned for 1905 but was delayed due to the late opening of the Simplon tunnel. On Expositions as displays of modernity and economic (and racial) might, see Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
[15] "[Il] tentative solenne a gareggiare con le più illustre e fastone città del mondo intero; affermarsi vittoriosamente eguale ad esse, almeno; raggiungerle tutte in competezza, almeno"; *Ars et labor*, 15 May 1906, 509. The 1881 Exhibition, the "Mostra nazionale delle Arti e dell'Industria", had been an exclusively Italian event, as were subsequent exhibitions held across Italy before 1906.

by ambitious egoists, subjugated by Frenchmen, Spaniards, Austrians", one author argued, the city would now finally reveal its independence and strength.[16] The ambitions of the Exposition's organisers not merely to announce, but actively to *perform* the nation's entrance into modernity were clear from the official guide: as the book informed readers, their aim was to "to give a unique character of great solemnity to the event, bearer of new elements of life and progress not only to the city, but throughout Italy", and a deluge of publications issued throughout the year bore witness to the event's importance.[17]

Originally planned to occupy the park of the fifteenth-century Castello Sforzesco, the international scale of the event necessitated an expansion into the then-rural Piazzi D'Armi, with the two sites connected by an elevated tram.[18] A relic of Milan's noble past was thus connected to a suburban site identified with the city's future, with the two elegantly fused by the magic of late-nineteenth-century industrialisation – even if the trams themselves were chronically overcrowded. The decision to inaugurate the Simplon tunnel's opening with an international exposition took advantage of an obvious opportunity to advertise the economic progress Milan had made in the decades following Italian unification, as well as the changing fortunes of the Italian state more generally.[19] As with the 1881 Exhibition, however, the exposition was susceptible to a wide range of local and national appropriations. Milan could function as a metonym for the nation within the event's international remit, with the Exposition's Italian displays representing the country's burgeoning industrial prowess. Yet Milan was repeatedly presented as exceptional in the local press in light of the focus on

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[16] "L'anno 1906 non segnerà soltanto una delle date storiche più eloquenti della vita industrial sempre più operose e più larga di Milano: sarà anche forse il principio di un nuovo periodo storico di questa città, la quale, dopo secoli di servaggio straniero, seppe così fortemente accentuare la propria gagliardia indipendente e iniziatrice. Ruinata, distrutta dai violenti, dominate da ambiziosi egoisti, soggiogata da Francesci, Spagnuoli, austriaci, contaminate persino dai Cosacchi, Milano diede al fine nell'esplosione magnifica delle Cinque Giornate il segno epico e storico della propria virile dignità e indipendenza". Raffaello Barbiera, "L'Ascensione di Milano e l'Esposizione", in *Milano e l'Esposizione Internazionale del Sempione 1906: Cronica Illustrata dell'Esposizione*, ed. E.A. Marescotti & Ed. Ximenes (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1906), 99.

[17] "Vennero così a fondersi in una sola varie iniziative che da diverse associazioni Milanesi erano state prese per dar singolare carattere di solennità all'avvenimento grandioso, apportatore di nuovi elementi di vita e di progresso non alla citta soltanto, ma all'Italia tutta." See "Poche parole sull'origine e sullo sviluppo dell'Esposizione" in the *Guida Ufficiale* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1906), 114. In practice, the opening of the Exposition on 29 April 1906 was partly overshadowed by the eruption of Vesuvius in Naples earlier in the month, a national catastrophe that dominated the media in the following weeks.

[18] See "Milano, il traforo del Sempione e l'esposizione del 1906 (XI, 1906)", cited in *Città Effimera: Arte, Tecnologia, Esotismo all'esposizione internazionale di Milano del 1906: Fotografie inedite dagli archive di Leone Soldati e Vincenzo Conti*, ed. Pietro Redondi (Milan: Mazzotta, 2015), 28.

[19] The exposition's focus on transport and communication technologies also reflected the more pragmatic government policy to nationalise transport in recent years, and was thus equally entangled with domestic politics as with international nation-branding. See Gianni Toniolo, *Storia economica dell'Italia liberale (1850-1918)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988); and Alberto Acquarone, *L'Italia giolittiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981).

industrialisation.[20] Earlier national exhibitions in Florence, Genoa, Turin, Naples, Palermo as well as Milan itself had set a number of important precedents, but this time Milan offered itself as a model for the nation's future – the city through which international encounters would now inevitably be mediated for Italians and foreigners alike. "Milan, the rich industrial Milan, whose name all us Italians from Turin to Trapani pronounce with pride, as the exponent of activity that will renew and raise up our country", intoned the *Corriere della sera* at the year's opening: a sentiment the Exposition sought to verify for visitors by cementing the the city as the nation's urban centre.[21]

Amongst the exhibits, those dedicated to specific industrial or agricultural products alternated with national pavilions, highlighting the overlap between locally specific and more globalised products of industrialisation. A specially designed panorama demonstrated the journey from Milan to Paris enabled by the new tunnel, while railway and aeroplane exhibits outlined developments in transcontinental travel. Germany, France and Great Britain – hosts of celebrated earlier expositions – appeared alongside smaller nations and emerging powers, in ways that hinted at shifting hierarchies between international locales.[22] The presence of non-European pavilions – in particular from China and Egypt – allowed commentators to indulge in predictably Orientalising fantasies, with the Cairo street scene (as at earlier expositions) proving especially popular. At the same time, these exoticised, apparently timeless pavilions helped to position the Exposition as a space that accommodated a variety of historical stages within itself: the Exposition's celebration of cosmopolitan modernity theatrically played out on the stage of Milan's past and present.[23]

In a recent comparative study of fin-de-siècle imperial expositions in London, Paris and Berlin, historian Alexander Geppert has drawn attention to the "complex interplay between national and internationalism in a concrete urban locality" at such events.[24] Geppert

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[20] "Ed essendo questa la prima volta in cui dalla sua più moderna città l'Italia parla in sè in confronte del mondo moderno, è bene che essa dichiari anche questo, tranquillamente, con fede". See Ugo Ojetti, "Verso l'avvenire", *Corriere della sera*, 29 April 1906.

[21] "Milano, la ricca, l'industre Milano, da cui tutti noi italiani, da Torino a Trapani, pronunziamo il nome con orgoglio, come esponente dell'attivita nella quale si rinnova e si rialza il nostro paese"; *Corriere della sera*, 1 January 1906. On Milan's self-fashioning as Italy's moral capital, see Giovanna Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale: letteratura e pubblicistica a Milano fra otto e novecento* (Milan: Edizioni di comunità, 1982); and in a later period, John Foot, *Milan since the Miracle: City, Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

[22] Germany, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Canada and South America all had individual national pavilions; forty countries participated in total.

[23] The fundamentally colonial ideology of international expositions has long been recognised by scholars: see Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31/2 (1989), 217-36.

[24] Alexander Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 11.

emphasises the rhetorical trope of expositions as "fleeting cities", highlighting the interdependent relationship between exposition and city. The former invariably incorporated the host nation, while encouraging a perception of the city itself as an urban spectacle extending beyond the temporary duration of the event. Drawing on the spatial theories of Henri Lefebvre, Geppert identifies expositions as moments when different aspects of socially-produced space were explicitly juxtaposed and interwoven: the "representation of space" (here the exposition itself) placed alongside the "space of representation" – the permanent city in which the exposition was displayed and observed.[25] In Milan, a similar dynamic was continually created between the exposition that aimed to represent the globe, and the city in which it was staged, with boundaries between the two spaces becoming porous. Milan had its own pavilion within the Exposition, for example, celebrating the city's recent improvements in drainage and hygiene, alongside its many artistic riches and landmarks.[26] Most strikingly, the Exposition entrance was a life-size replica of the opening of the Simplon Tunnel, allowing visitors to trace the tunnel's construction through a number of interior displays before entering Milan's own grand reimagination of the fin-de-siècle Exposition.[27]

The Exhibition of Italians Abroad became recognised as a highlight amongst the numerous pavilions (see Fig. 4.1).[28] Initially overlooked in the press, by the final week a proposal had been put forth to make the pavilion a permanent fixture of the city's cultural landscape.[29] A feature borrowed from earlier national exhibitions in Genoa and Turin, the pavilion celebrated the achievements of Italian citizens in the Americas and Northern Africa, eliding complex discourses about emigration and colonisation to emphasise the persistence of Italian cultural practices across a globally-dispersed community.[30] Focused on Italian-language newspapers, the pavilion also included photographs, statistics and displays by 112

[25] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 222-40. For Henri Lefebvre's own account, see *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; first edition 1974). Lefebvre defines socially-produced space as a trialectic, in which *conçu* (the representation of space) and *vécu* (the space of representation) are continually supplemented by *perçu* (the lived practice of space).
[26] Reporting on the Exposition, *L'illustrazione italiana* remarked "The expositions are a little new world in the old large world; they have a life of their own; they live on special events that take place exclusively in them and for them; they have their own characteristic public, cosmopolitan, accustomed to all the joys and all the little disagreements that an Exposition can offer". See "Corriere", 24 June 1906, 600.
[27] On the construction of the Tunnel, see *Cronica Illustrata dell'Esposizione,* 50-71. The interior of the entrance contained an exhibition dedicated to the tunnel's construction.
[28] See for example "Esposizione di Milano: La Mostra degli Italiani all'estero", *Corriere della sera,* 18 September 1906.
[29] "La mostra degli Italiani all'estero è stata per vari mesi […] la Cenerentola fra le sue varie e possenti sorelle dell'esposizione", *Corriere della sera*, 2 November 1906, 1.
[30] On the earlier pavilions, see Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style*, and Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 119-22.

Catholic missions in order to outline the industry and patriotism of Italian citizens living abroad.[31] Argentina and Eritrea were given their own stands within the pavilion, a move that dissolved awkward power distinctions into the more neutral notion of "the Italian collective who exercise their work outside the confines of Italy", in the words of the pavilion guide.[32] As Robert Viscusi observes, displays of emigrant activity typically presented Italian émigrés in a "double optic": the self-presentation of the diasporic community held in balance with the decisions of various Chambers of Commerce, for whom the exhibition functioned as a way to highlight economic opportunities outside of Italy for Italian businessmen.[33] The pavilion at the same time sought to negotiate a delicate balance between the national, the foreign and the diasporic, avoiding exhibits that could be subject to an inconvenient overlap of collective claims – an issue especially important for the awarding of prizes.

Despite this emphasis on clear distinctions between national allegiances, however, the achievements of Italian citizens were also prominently on display within a separate South American pavilion that had been specially commissioned by the American consulates in Milan in collaboration with the local government (see Fig. 4.2).[34] In tune with the colonial ambitions developing towards Argentina, the official chronicle declared that "[t]he Argentinian Republic effectively constitutes, by the number of Italians who have emigrated and are emigrating – 1,500,000 between 1859 and 1905 – a second Italy, yet [one] strange and mysterious, of which we know too little and of which we believe we know too much: a second Italy, of which returning compatriots fortunate and unfortunate alike have told miraculous and disheartening things, that we could judge on the extent and trustworthiness of them."[35] A recent series of articles by journalist Luigi Barzini in the *Corriere della sera* chronicling his visit to Buenos Aires – republished as *Argentina vista come è* (1902) – had

[31] See the pavilion catalogue, *Esposizione di Milano 1906: Catalogo della Mostra 'Gli Italiani all'Estero'* (Milan, 1906).
[32] Ibid., 5-6. The USA was also represented within the Exhibition of Italians Abroad, and the Buffalo Bill show proved a notable attraction at the wider Exposition alongside other North American exhibits, but there was no specially-dedicated USA pavilion. Having hosted in St Louis in 1904, it would appear that the US government decided not to offer a unique pavilion.
[33] See Robert Viscusi, "The Universal Exposition", in *Strangers in a Strange Land: A Survey of Italian-Language American Books (1830-1945)*, ed. James P. Periconi (New York: Bordighera Press, 2013), 30-41; the quotation is located on 33. Viscusi's essay examines the guide book *Gli Italiani negli Stati Uniti D'America* produced for the 1906 Expo, that was inspired by an earlier Argentine volume, *Gli Italiani nella Repubblica Argentina* (1898).
[34] See the *Guida Ufficiale,* 132.
[35] "Effetivamente la Repubblica Argentina costituisce, per il numero degli italiani che vi hanno emigrate e che vi emigrano – 1,500,000 dal 1859 al 1905 – una seconda Italia, strana e misteriosa ancora, e di cui sappiamo troppo poco e di cui crediamo troppo di sapere: una seconda Italia, da cui i compatriotti fortunati e quelli sfortunati, tornando, hanno raccontato cose troppo miracolese e troppo sconfortanti, perchè noi potessimo, sulla scorta e sulla fede di esse, raccapezzarci e guidicare." *Cronica Illustrata dell'Esposizione*, 608.

already offered readers a deeply contradictory series of representations of the country, highlighting the poverty and exploitation that existed among Italian émigrés alongside the promised riches of the New World. Noting the vast expenditure on public projects and urban expansion, for example, Barzini wryly commented that "the important thing is that Buenos Aires maintains its position as the "the second Latin city in the world" – the first, you know, is Paris – and it matters little that finances are ruined, and that debts mount in frightening proportions".[36] Elsewhere, Barzini painted a gloomy portrait of life in the immigrant districts of the city, while acknowledging the extraordinary contribution of Italian citizens in developing the infrastructure of an emergent superpower.[37]

Fig. 4.1. Pavilion of Italians Abroad (Author's private collection)

[36] Luigi Barzini, *Argentina vista come è* (Milan, 1902), 105-6. Barzini's account built on earlier travel writings, such as Edmondo de Amicis's by-then classic *Sull'Oceano*. Already in 1886, the *Corriere della sera* had prophesied that "the Argentine Republic will, in a few years, be a new Italy across the Ocean": "L'America Latina", 19-20 September 1886.
[37] Barzini, *Argentina vista come è*, 144-63.

Fig. 4.2. Pavilion of South America (Author's private collection)

Barzini's aim was clearly to demystify Argentina for his Italian readership, and to alert Italians to the hardships that still existed in the New World – even if the sheer numbers making the journey across the Atlantic demonstrated the continued allure of a life in the Americas. Argentina's ambiguous position as a new Italy across the Atlantic was reinforced elsewhere during the Exposition, however, by sustained news reports on the emigration crisis. After the Decorative Arts and Architecture pavilions were destroyed by fire on 3 August 1906, *Il secolo*'s coverage over the reconstruction was placed alongside a lead story on the crisis of emigration, "the greatest problem of modern Italy".[38] Lamenting the many citizens departing the country in order to "secure themselves a better fortune in America", the paper estimated that the total number of emigrants in 1906 alone would be one million – a figure that dwarfed the population of Milan itself, and offered an ironic counterpart to the Exposition's focus on human mobility.[39]

The South American pavilion reinforced the promulgation of a transatlantic Italian identity through numerous parallels with the exhibition of Italians Abroad. The former featured a statue of Columbus at its entrance in the act of sighting land – a physical reminder

[38] "Il più grosso problema dell'Italia moderna", *Il secolo*, 23 September 1906.
[39] "[Hanno] disertato quei paesi per recarsi […] miglior fortuna in America", ibid. The *Guida* informed readers that Milan's population in 1906 was 600,000.

of the Italo-centric gaze of the exhibits – while the Argentinian section centred around a giant sculpture of Garibaldi on horseback, a monument to the general's time in South America and his involvement in the Uruguayan Civil War. So strong were the parallels, in fact, that in an exchange between *La perseveranza* and the commissary of the Latin American pavilion published a few weeks after the opening, the newspaper asserted that "many of the exhibits in the Latin American Pavilion are *Italian*, and therefore ought to be displayed in the Italians Abroad section", concluding that the two pavilions had effectively entered into competition.[40] The implication that the modern Italian and Argentinian states shared roots both from the discovery of America in 1492 and from the Risorgimento in turn underlined the unusual historical purview of the two pavilions within an Exposition otherwise largely dominated by ideas of technological modernity. Not merely focused on the present and an imagined future, the pavilions traced a shared lineage of Italian mobility and productivity, emphasising a narrative of parallel yet ambiguously hierarchical development. "This display, destined to be the summit of *italianità* abroad, could not and should not do without a historical part, that recounts past Italian glories: a part exclusively dedicated to the propagation and dissemination of *italianità*", declared the guide.[41]

The tensions inherent in Milan's progressive (and nationally emblematic) self-image were further highlighted in the renaming of prominent thoroughfares during the Exposition's run. Corso Loreto – now one of the city's most prominent shopping streets – was renamed Corso Buenos Aires, while two adjacent squares were renamed Piazza Argentina and Piazza Lima in honour of the nation's relationship with South America. Renowned for its Lazaretto (a quarantine station for travellers), Corso Loreto was associated with movement to and from the city and had become a key part of Milan's popular representation through the final pages of Manzoni's novel *I promessi sposi*. The renaming of the three sites into a "South American" quarter recognized the expanded conceptions of travel and cultural interchange that were marking the city by 1906, and did so within a district cut off from the city's medieval centre and already undergoing rapid architectural change.[42] If the name "Corso Buenos Aires" was on the one hand a sentimental homage to the millions of emigrants who

[40] "molti degli Espositori dell'America Latina sono *italiani*, e dovevano adunque esporre nel padiglione degli Italiani all'Estero"; "Mostro degli Italiani all'estero ed America Latina", *La perseveranza*, 22 July 1906.
[41] "Questa mostra, destinata ad essere come l'apoteosi della italianità all'estero, non poteva e non doveva mancare di una parte storica, che raccogliesse le glorie italiane del passato: di una parte esclusivamente dedicate alla propogazione e alla difesa della italianità". See the *Guida*, 106.
[42] On the city's architectural change, see Elisabetta Colombo, *Come si governava Milano: politiche pubbliche nel secondo Ottocento* (Milan, 2005).

had moved across the Atlantic, the actual choice of location embedded the Americas amidst more immediately topical notions of the future. As the renaming reminded visitors, the Exposition as a whole was dominated by visual and verbal signifiers of other realities, residing within the venerable surroundings of the ancient city. Such signifiers drew attention to Milan's position within international cultural, economic and communication networks, while inviting visitors to imagine unseen worlds and hidden realities fleetingly available to them within the Exposition's existence.

The Sounds of Milanese Modernity

The musical activities at the Exposition reflected the wider cultural politics of the city during this period. As numerous scholars have noted, Milan's musical life had since the 1870s been marked by the growing internationalism of the operatic repertoire and a sustained emphasis on symphonic music. Civil authorities had sought to expand the range of musical performances presented at La Scala, as part of a wider programme of democratisation and modernisation across Italian theatres precipitated in part by the collapse of public funding.[43] As Axel Körner has argued, the expansion of the musical (and more specifically operatic) repertoire in theatres across Italy during this period can be seen as part of a wider effort to engage with transnational attitudes towards modernity, "by a nation which understood its cosmopolitan orientation as an integral part of its cultural value system, its intellectual ambition and its humanist legacy".[44]

If the diversification of the repertoire could be construed as a means of participating in a broader European understanding of modernity, persistent tropes of crisis nonetheless continued to circulate – ones that frequently (if problematically) elided Italian operatic decline with post-unification disillusionment.[45] Commentary during the years surrounding the Exposition repeatedly returned to "the insoluble La Scala question" – problems that were both economic and artistic, and that reverberated after the temporary closure of the theatre in

[43] See Jutta Toelle, *Bühne der Stadt: Mailand und das Teatro alla Scala zwischen Risorgimento und Fin de Siècle* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 62-7; Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (New York, 2009), esp. 1-79; and Fiamma Nicolodi, "Opera Production from Italian Unification to the Present", in *Opera Production and its Resources*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi & Giorgio Pestelli (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 165-228.
[44] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 222.
[45] On concepts of "progress" and "crisis" in Milan in the 1870s, see Francesca Vella, "Bridging Divides: Verdi's *Requiem* in Post-Unification Italy", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 140/2 (2015), 313-42.

the 1897-8 season.[46] The financial pressures of subsidising the theatre, combined with an increasingly militant political atmosphere - that would eventually erupt into workers' riots in May 1898 – had led to the wholesale withdrawal of municipal funding; a situation only resolved by the intervention of private donors. Debates about the future of La Scala thus circled around several interrelated themes. Questions regarding the vitality of Italy's own operatic tradition, and the appropriate forms of musical modernity, had already rumbled in the press for several decades.[47] The recent high-profile failure of *Butterfly* had cast into doubt Puccini's already faltering position as the likely heir to Verdi's throne. Economic discussions, meanwhile, exposed uncertainty surrounding La Scala's role within the city's civic politics – as tourist attraction, cultural monument, elite playground or public service.[48]

Even more urgently, perhaps, the diffusion of operatic performers away from La Scala had in recent years brought into question its position as a centre of artistic excellence, and Italy's standing as the focus of Italian cultural activity. Already in the late 1880s – the era of Ricordi's confident assertions of La Scala's position – commentators had remarked on the ever-growing allure of American fees, which had hastened the decline of Italy's summer and autumn opera seasons. "From July or even June well into September, if not halfway through October, the big cities are all deserted", Francesco D'Arcais declared in 1889. "Artists now go to Buenos Aires and to Montevideo with the same nonchalance with which they once went from Rome to Bologna, or from Milan to Venice."[49] By the early twentieth century, such worries had reached a new pitch, as American markets for Italian opera boomed and La Scala could do little to retain some its most illustrious performers. "Those singers, who have turned their minds this way, have found outside of Italy a market that pays them much better […] the theatres of America offer them – to make them sing only their favoured operas – what at La Scala you can spend on an entire production", lamented *Il mondo artistico* during an ongoing series of articles about La Scala's difficulties later in the decade.[50] Foreign opportunities for

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[46] *Il mondo artistico*, 21 June 1908. On the closure, see Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera: From Verismo to Modernism, 1890-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), 167-74. A collection of articles from *Corriere della sera* about the La Scala problems was collected in April 1906, entitled *Sulla Questione della Scala*, ed P. Volpi; its circulation is unclear, however (the document is held at the Brera library in Milan).

[47] See Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) on the nationalist pressures on Puccini and his generation.

[48] See for example "Per l'avennire artistico della Scala", *La perseveranza*, 16 February 1906.

[49] Francesco D'Arcais, "Rassegna musicale e drammatica", *La nuova antologia* 25, 16 September 1889, 369-78; cited passages 369 and 371. Sections from this article are cited in Nicolodi, "Opera Production from Italian unification to the Present", 170.

[50] "coloro fra i cantanti, che hanno svolto le loro attitudini in tale senso, hanno trovato fuori d'Italia un mercato che li retribuisce assai meglio […] i teatri d'America offrono loro – per farli cantare solo opera nella loro

Italian singers outside Italy were signposted via reprints of foreign reviews and publicity photographs, in ways that cemented ideas of Italy's operatic decline. The San Francisco earthquake that nearly destroyed the city in April 1906, for example, was reported via the figure of Enrico Caruso, then on tour in the city with the Metropolitan Opera (rather than performing at the Exposition).[51] For audiences in Milan, operatic experience was thus inflected to an ever-greater degree by an awareness of Italian opera's global movements, an awareness occurring at unprecedented speed and attuned to Italy's shifting position within an international hierarchy.

In light of such anxieties, the musical offerings at the Exposition are especially revealing, suggesting the efforts of the city's cultural authorities to position Milan at the forefront of Italian musical modernity, yet in a context that invited a delicate handling of the city's national and transnational affiliations.[52] A pair of concerts conducted by Richard Strauss at the Exposition was especially widely-reported. A precursor to the Italian premiere of *Salome* (1905) in Turin later that year, these concerts featured a selection of Wagner's overtures, works by Weber and Beethoven, and a selection of Strauss's own tone poems, and were hailed as "an artistic event of the first order".[53] Strauss's position at the time as a predominantly instrumental composer who had recently gained extraordinary success in the operatic field cast him in an unusual light in the Milanese context: a potential Other against whom Italian musical modernity could be formulated; and whose *Salome* signified an ongoing travelling operatic scandal that risked leaving older works such as *La traviata* looking like historical relics.

Yet Strauss's appearances were only the most highly advertised of an extended series of orchestral concerts, organised by the committee overseeing festivities. The most ambitious of these events were the series of weekly concerts directed by Argentinian born, Milanese-trained conductor and composer Ettore Panizza in the Exposition's Great Hall, which brought

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specialità – quanto alla Scala si puo spendere per il complesso canoro di un intero spettacolo"; *Il mondo artistico*, 21 June 1908. For a discussion of America fees for Italian singers, see John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 142-6. By 1910-11, top singers at the Colón could earn up to 7000 francs per performance, with the top singers at the Met earning a similar amount; figures for smaller theatres are unknowable: 145.

[51] See "L'odissea degli artisti italiani", *Corriere della sera*, 22 April 1906.

[52] On music at Italian expositions more generally, see Alberto Napoli's in-progress doctoral dissertation (University of Bern).

[53] "Questi concerti segnarono un avennimento artistico di primo ordine"; *Il mondo artistico*, 21 September 1906, 5; see also *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 20 September 1906, 1. The Italian premiere of *Salome* had been offered to Toscanini by Strauss himself, but the conductor's move from Turin to Milan prompted a rivalry over the premiere; the performances in Turin were followed only a few days later by a production at La Scala.

together an orchestra of 100 professors to perform "the most difficult works of classical music, with magnificent shading and precise and effective blending", alongside technical novelties such as a concert for twenty harps.[54] Panizza's heritage made him an apt choice in light of the Exposition's international purview and its focus on the Italian diaspora: known both as Ettore and Héctor, he was the son of a cellist from Mantua who had trained in Milan before emigrating to Argentina in 1872; he thus embodied a kind of musical homecoming for the Italian emigrant community.[55] Panizza's Italian-language opera *Aurora* – set during the Argentinian war of independence – would soon become the first Argentinian opera to be premiered at the Teatro Colón when it reopened, and later became the source of one of Argentina's national anthems.[56]

Alongside all these concerts, choral and military band competitions (both national and international) sought to valorise the ideals of peaceful collective industry that underlay the Exposition's theme, while drawing on a gallimaufry of contemporary operatic hits, from the "Ride of the Valkries" to Massenet's *Esclarmonde*.[57] Yet for some commentators, actual Italian music was problematically absent within this celebration of modern musical life. Rather than an "acoustic signifier of the event's specificity" – as Annegret Fauser has written of the music at Paris's 1889 Exposition – the soundscape of the Milan Exposition was more an indicator of its interchangeability with other such events, and potentially portended nothing less than the loss of a specifically Milanese identity.[58] For *La perseveranza*, for example:

> If one may be allowed to say so, little, very little indeed, has been done – given the scale and significance of the event – to convey an idea during this great international festival of labour of what there is and what Italy can do under the banner of music, which in our country's history has more immortal pages, which is considered everywhere to be the favourite

[54] "[I] brani più difficile della musica clasica, con colorito magnifico, con precisa ed efficace fusione"; *Ars et labor*, August 1906, 713.
[55] For more on Panizza's career, see his autobiography, *Medio siglo de vida musical. Ensayo autobiográfico* (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1952); and Sebastiano De Filippi & Daniel Varacalli Costa, *Alta en el Cielo: Vida y Obra de Héctor Panizza* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Italiano de Cultura, 2017). The career of Panizza's father and other Italian émigrés to Argentina, is explored in Anibal E. Cetrangolo, "Aida Times Two: How Italian Veterans of Two Historic Aida Productions Shaped Argentina's Musical History", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 28/1 (2016), 79-105.
[56] *Aurora* was translated into Spanish in 1945. On the opera, see Malena Kuss, "Nativistic Strains in Argentine Operas Premiered at the Teatro Colón (1908-1972)" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1976).
[57] "Bande musicali militari internazionali", *Ars et labor*, June 1906, 593-600.
[58] Annegret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester, NJ: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 8.

> daughter of this enchanted land, where nature and language are themselves the most exquisite, beguiling melody. What has been done does not lack a certain significance, I do not deny it, but what there is, has always been done elsewhere.[59]

Reflecting the increasingly international focus of Milan's musical life in recent decades, the concert series was perceived to have sacrificed local specificity for a more routinely international exposition soundtrack. Overlooking Italy's illustrious past and the innate melody of an "enchanted" land, the Exposition's focus on the present and future had replaced a pastoral fantasy of the nation with an industrial one, that risked giving rise to a broader process of national disenchantment; the loss of individuality in commodity culture even echoed on a national scale through the participation in an international musical marketplace.[60]

Within the Exposition's pavilions proper, meanwhile, a temporary display of musical objects juxtaposed the latest American innovations in recording technology with prized Italian string instruments. In shifting visitors' attention from musical performances to musical media, the displays once again highlighted the internationalisation of Milan's musical culture, as well as music's involvement with broader economic and technological networks. Such musical objects existed on the border between the archeological and the prophetic, as new inventions that promised to reanimate the past in ever more precise ways. Paradoxically, however, these objects were frequently left silent, in ways that recall Walter Benjamin's remarks on "the enthronement of the commodity in its lustre of distraction" at Parisian expositions.[61] More recently, Cristina della Coletta has drawn attention to the prevalence of "reality objects" amongst the more exotic displays of fin-de-siècle international expositions: items which bore an iconic relationship to realities beyond the boundaries of the Exposition space, and encouraged visitors to imagine distant worlds via material objects.[62] Understood in the light of Benjamin's and Coletta's arguments, then, the musical displays seem at one level

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[59] "Mi sia permesso di dire che ben poco, anzi pochissimo s'è fatto, data l'entità, il significato dell'avvenimento per porgere un'idea durante questa grande festa internazionale del lavoro, di ciò che è, di ciò che può fare l'Italia sotto il rapporto della musica, che nella storia del nostro paese ha più pagine immortali, che è considerata dappertutto come la figlia prediletta di questa terra incantata ove la natura, l'idioma sono per sè stessi, la più squisita, affascinante melodia. Cìo che si farà non manca d'una certa importanza, non nego, ma è cìo che fu sempre fatto altrove". "La Musica all'Esposizione", *La perseveranza*, 22 July 1906.

[60] This ambivalence was expressed further in the exposition by 133 workers from Florence – the so-called "artisan" city" – who had been invited to attend. See Anna Pellegrino, *Operai intellettuali: Lavoro, tecnologia e progresso all'Esposizione di Milano (1906)* (Manduria: Piero Lacaita Editore, 2008), especially 33-55.

[61] See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York: Belknap Press, 1999), 1228. On musical displays at London's 1851 Exposition, see Flora Willson, "Hearing Things: Musical Objects at the 1851 Great Exhibition", in *Sound Knowledge: Music and Science in London, 1800-51*, ed. James Q. Davies and Ellen Lockhart (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 227-45.

[62] Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style*, 43.

to underline the intertwining of musical and commercial culture in Milan around the Exposition, and more specifically the mediation of aesthetic experience through capitalist modes of consumption. As Emanuela Scarpellini has suggested, the "most majestic architecture created to give dignity and prestige to bourgeois Milan was neither a civil monument […] nor a government palace, a museum, nor a traditional work or art, but a shopping arcade", the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II completed in 1877, a historical fact that indicates that "social prestige and economic progress revealed themselves in a commercial form".[63] Scarpellini adds that the rhetoric deployed in adverts for the first department stores in Italy frequently drew on the vocabulary of the theatre: sites of social display and sensory discrimination that were already familiar to visitors, and that similarly encouraged them to imagine realities far beyond the confines of their immediate physical environment.[64]

If such arguments regarding urban spectacle rehearse observations more typically made in relation to Paris, the overlap between aesthetic and commercial experience in Milan nonetheless gains further impact when considered in light of the discursive networks that made up Milanese musical life around the Exposition.[65] As both Giulio Confalonieri and Jutta Toelle have argued, Milan's reputation as an exceptionally musical city was generated at least in part by the transnational circulation of scores and print journalism. The home of Italy's most important musical publishing houses and the site of a uniquely active musical press within Italy, the image of Milan's musical vibrancy and the "La Scala myth" at times concealed the city's musical deficiencies earlier in the nineteenth century and its financial woes at the turn of the century.[66] This emphasis on the *constructed* nature of Milanese musical identity points towards a specifically Milanese aspect of musical experience at this time: towards music understood as inseparable from discourse about music; or else towards representations of music as integral to the city's musical identity.[67] The oft-silent musical displays in some way therefore offered an appropriate counterpart for Milan's wider musical culture: celebrating industrial labour, they invited spectators to imagine sonic worlds unheard

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[63] Emanuela Scarpellini, *Material Nation: A Consumer's History of Modern Italy*, trans. Daphne Hughes & Andrew Newton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69-70.
[64] Scarpellini, *Material Nation*, 79.
[65] See, for example, Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
[66] Giulio Confalonieri, "Milano, città musicale" in his *Cento anni di concerti di Società del quartetto di Milano* (Milano: Civica raccolta delle stampe, 1964), 1-10; and Toelle, *Bühne der Stadt*.
[67] On Milan's media networks, see also Gavin Williams, "Arts of Noise: Sound and Media in Milan, c.1900", (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2013).

or already vanished in time, while also drawing them briefly into an international commodity circuit that shaped contemporary operatic and musical culture.

Both the freestanding musical displays and the musical exhibits within the Exhibition of Italians Abroad raised similar critical anxieties, however. In this case, the concerns centred on the pavilions' apparent neglect of Italy's longstanding association with the operatic voice, and of the global dissemination of Italian musical culture: something ideally expressed in "memories and documents of our glorious singing in Italy and abroad".[68] In a front-page article reviewing the Exhibition of Italians Abroad, for example, *Il mondo artistico* lamented:

> Dealing today, for the first time, at the Milan Exposition with something that particularly concerns the nature of this journal, we find ourselves in an original and strange situation: we must write about something at the exposition which isn't there.[…] In fact, while they are setting up – or at least so they assure us – a session of musical arts, of which we'll report in its own time, we have looked with a care worthy of Diogenes for the so-called artistic session that forms part of – or perhaps we ought to say *should* form part of – the Exhibition of Italians Abroad.[69]

As the article goes on to protest, the Exhibition of Italians Abroad at Milan's Universal Exposition was in fact marked by a bewildering lack of interest in the performing arts. While a small section was devoted to theatre, those displays centred on spoken drama were disappointingly small and often difficult to locate within the pavilion; as Enrico Polese asked in an article published earlier in *L'arte drammatica* (and cited in *Il mondo artistico*), "if a foreigner succeeded in finding the pavilion (anything can happen in this world!), what would they think of our national theatre?".[70] Such declarations support Silvana Patriarca's contention that discussions within Italy about national character have repeatedly been informed to an unusual degree by foreign perceptions of Italian identity.[71] Yet if spoken

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[68] "Non, è vero, nel senso da noi desiderato: come accolta cioè di ricordi e di documenti della nostra gloria canora in Italia e all'Estero". *Il mondo artistico,* September 1906, 3.

[69] "Occupandoci oggi, la prima volta, dell'Esposizione Internazionale di Milano, per quanto riguarda particolarmente l'indole del nostro giornale, ci troviamo in condizione originale e curiosa: dobbiamo scrivere di quello che all'Esposizione non c'è [...] Infatti, mentre sti sta allestendo – almeno così si assicura – una sezione d'arte musicale, di cui verremo parlando a suo tempo, abbiamo cercato anche noi con una cura digne del simbolico Diogene la cosidetta sezione artisti che fa parte – forse convien dette *dovrebbe* fa parte – della Mostra degli italiani all'Estero." *Il mondo artistico,* 1 July 1906, 1-2.

[70] "Ma se un forestiere riuscirà a trovare il padiglione (tutto può darsi al mondo!) che cosa penserà del nostro teatro nazionale?"

[71] Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), especially 10-11. The long legacy of Italy's perception by foreigners as an especially musical land was well documented in the most specialist musical press: see for example G. Roberti's article, "La musica in Italian nel secolo XVIII, secondo le impressioni di viaggiatori stranieri", *Rivista musicale*

theatre was understood as poorly represented in the Exposition, the musical arts fared even worse:

> "The land of song", "the Italian *bel canto*", "the country of sounds", all the beautiful phrases made to signify Italy, Italy and Italy, do they have an echo in this exposition? No.[72]

For *Il mondo artistico*, it was evident that music had been given no role within a pavilion displaying Italy's global triumphs. Indeed, the journal was forced to acknowledge that the Exposition itself could add little to the crown of celebrated Italian performers around the globe, and that the small scale of the artistic exposition was perhaps inevitable: "Neither Eleonora Duse, nor Ermete Novelli, nor all the other minor figures, would become greater or more admired through this. And so?"[73]

The minor position occupied by the dramatic arts within the Exposition thus aroused conflicting emotions. Music – in this account at least – seems to sit awkwardly within contemporary definitions of Milanese identity: at once integral to the city and nation's self-image, yet irreconcilable with its present-day position in a global order. Particularly revealing, however, are the variety of real and imagined critical voices that the journalist summons up to articulate and contextualise his emotional maelstrom. First comes the hypothetical foreigner, for whom the displays would provide a measure of Italy's national theatre; then the presumed intentions of international Italian performers; and later the foreigner returns in a fantasy of the reactions the musical displays might have aroused:

> And how many interesting memories have been unable to emerge here, to tell the foreigner once again our beautiful fame and to revive in our Italian souls a legitimate pride?[74]

More interesting still are the phrases in quotation marks, intended to express Italy's fundamental relationship with music – phrases that lack an author within the text's polyphony of voices. The union of Italy with music – above all with vocal and theatrical music – appears as a conception that hovers uncertainly between "Italian souls" and visiting strangers. Yet it is nevertheless an idea that is the site of national self-discovery and self-recollection: an

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italiana 7 (1900), 698-729; and H. Kling, "Madame de Staël et la musique", *Rivista musicale italiana* 13 (1906), 221-43.

[72] "'La terra dei canti', 'il bel canto italiano', 'il paese dei suoni', tutte bellissime frase fatte per significare l'Italia, L'Italia, e L'Italia, hanno forse un qualche eco in questa esposizione? No." *Il mondo artistico*, 1 July 1906, 1-2.

[73] "Nè Eleonora Duse, nè Ermete Novelli, nè tutti gli altri minori, diventerebbero per questo più grandi e più considerati. Dunque?" Ibid.

[74] "E quante memorie interessanti non avrebbero potuto emergere qui, per dire al forestiere ancora una volta la nostra bella fama e rinfrescare nell'anima nostro di italiani un legittimo orgoglio?" Ibid.

audible *lieu de mémoire*. This identity, then, is revealed precisely in the encounter with the Other; but what is disclosed at the Exposition is instead an absence, a sonorous vacuum. Without Italian music – that is, music *understood* as Italian – the Exposition itself was in some sense empty; and as the article concludes, the hope of future musical displays could only enable the Milanese "to enjoy living again with wishful thinking", in fantasies paradoxically focused on the reiteration of the past.[75]

Back to the Future

These complaints notwithstanding, the operatic voice was of course not entirely silent around the Exposition. Alongside brief revivals of *Manon*, *Falstaff*, and Catalani's *Loreley*, the most contemporary operatic offering in Milan around the Exposition was the premiere of Alberto Franchetti's *La figlia di Jorio.* An adaptation of Gabriele D'Annunzio's celebrated play, it was conceived as a union of two of Italy's most prominent artists. Those with an eye for local politics would also have noticed the parallels with the premiere of Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*, which had featured at the National Exposition in Genoa in 1892 and which re-told the "discovery" of America in honour of its 400th anniversary.[76] While *La figlia di Jorio*'s plot offered no such concessions to local history, the triumphant premiere of D'Annunzio's play in Milan two years earlier enabled Franchetti's opera to act as a celebration of Milan's theatrical present, and invited commentators from across a wide variety of publications to assess the ease with which Franchetti had responded to the challenge of setting D'Annunzio to music.[77] Despite the presence of a large international crowd at the premiere, Franchetti's music was largely received as an unnecessary adjunct to the drama. "For us the opera has weakened the impression of tragedy", confessed the *Domenica della sera*, while later performances similarly elicited only very modest praise.[78] An exoticisation of Italy's rural

[75] Later newspaper coverage suggests that any displays added at a later date were only minimal and did little to alter the modest status of the musical exhibition. See again "Esposizione di Milano: La Mostra degli Italiani all'estero", *Corriere della sera*, 18 September 1906.
[76] On Franchetti's opera, see Luca Zoppelli, "The Twilight of the True Gods: 'Cristoforo Colombo', 'I Medici' and the Construction of Italian History", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8/3 (1996), 251-69; and Davide Ceriani, "Romantic Nostalgia and Wagnerismo during the age of Verismo: The Case of Alberto Franchetti", *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 14/2 (2017), 211-42.
[77] D'Annunzio's play tells the story of a doomed love affair between a shepherd and a female pariah, using elements of dialect from D'Annunzio's home region of Abruzzo. The story was later also adapted into an opera by Ildebrando Pizzetti (*La Figlia di Iorio*, 1954).
[78] "In noi l'opera ha attenuato l'impressione della tragedia", *Domenica della sera*, April 1906. The opera's later critical reception has been brutal: "taken as a whole, the music of Alberto Franchetti unequivocally cheapened *figlia di Jorio*, and turned it into an utterly worthless, ugly, opera" commented the *Revista musicale italiana* (1939), 198; cited in Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera*, 256.

past, D'Annunzio's play offered a glance back at a pastoral way of life steeped in superstition that the nation was presumed to have long abandoned by the time of the Exposition; yet the opera's negative reception foregrounded the uneasy fit between urban and operatic modernity, the latter increasingly centred on foreign works and the revival of operas from Italy's past that risked a dissolution of the city's operatic self.

In light of such wide-ranging debates, the revival of *La traviata* at La Scala in early 1906 unsurprisingly triggered a number of historical recollections. These shifted between the work and its performance history, memories of Verdi himself, and observations on the changing character of Milan's musical culture.[79] Verdi's self-fashioning as a musical father figure for the newly-founded Italian nation has of course been the subject of much scholarly investigation, associations firmly in place by the premiere of the *Traviata* production in 1906.[80] As Senici has argued, the mood of national festivity that had marked *Falstaff*'s premiere in 1893 was in stark contrast to the opera's muted public reception, a situation that reflected the disconnection between the work's self-consciously modern aesthetic and the nationalistic nostalgia surrounding the event. Both before and immediately after his death, in fact, the popular image of Verdi was overwhelmingly wedded to his relationship with an earlier musical aesthetic: one in which (as Senici writes), "Verdi the prophet of the Risorgimento and its last surviving witness stood for an age in which opera was the product of a unified society and a unified culture, an age in which the artist could effortlessly address his fellow artists and the public, Kenner and Liebhaber, at the same time, and aesthetically as well as politically."[81] Within the Exposition itself, the privileged status of Verdi's corpus within the national imagination was exemplified by Ricordi's exhibition of a number of his operatic scores alongside those of other Italian masters such as Rossini.[82] Despite this sacralisation, however, *La traviata* had in fact not been presented at La Scala since 1893, when three performances had preceded the premiere of *Falstaff* (the first of which was

[79] Francesca Vella draws attention to the implications of this historical awareness in relation to performance culture around the 1881 National Exposition, in "Milan, *Simon Boccanegra* and the Late-Nineteenth-Century Operatic Museum", *Verdi Perspektiven* 1 (2016), 93-122.
[80] On a recent summary of debates about Verdi's national position, see Roger Parker, "Verdi politico: A Wounded Cliché Regroups", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17/2 (2012), 427-36. For a more recent account dealing with the early nineteenth century, see also Mary Ann Smart, *Waiting for Verdi: Opera and Political Opinion in Nineteenth-Century Italy, 1815-1848* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).
[81] Emanuele Senici, "Verdi's "Falstaff" at Italy's Fin de Siècle", *The Musical Quarterly* 85/2 (2001), 274-310; quotation 301.
[82] "Esposizione Internazionale di Milano, 1906", *Ars et labor*, August 1906, 823-4. False news reports circulated that the scores of both *La traviata* and Rossini's *La gazza ladra* had been destroyed in the Exposition's blaze.

attended by Verdi himself).[83] The decision to stage the opera at La Scala in 1906 was therefore both an act of local remembrance and a more covert one of cultural reconciliation: celebrating not just *La traviata* but Verdi himself, the performances could once again exhume an imagined earlier age of political and aesthetic unity, while also indirectly trumping Paris's own claims over the figure of Violetta Valéry. The opera's original premiere in Venice (rather than Milan) was in the process largely passed over; Verdi's earlier compositional aesthetic and his later association with Milan were collapsed into a narrative of unruffled identification between composer and city.

The position of *La traviata* within the Verdian canon by 1906 was nevertheless also coloured by more recent operatic developments. Most notably, the *giovane scuola*'s experiments with realist sound and setting had cast Verdi's opera as an unusually prescient precursor, and *La traviata* had emerged as a persistent intertextual reference point for the younger generation of Italian composers.[84] Stagings of *La traviata* in Italy and abroad in the previous two decades had also been caught up in this changing theatrical tide, with a number of earlier productions indulging in nineteenth-century crinolines for Violetta, while maintaining eighteenth-century costumes for the other characters and for the setting.[85] The decision in 1906 to cast Rosina Storchio in the lead could only heighten the sense that Verdi's opera foreshadowed contemporary operatic developments. Famed as Mimì and Zazà, Storchio was highly familiar in more recent depictions of the Parisian underbelly in Milan and abroad. Leopold Mugnone, like Storchio, had not only established himself as a regular fixture in Latin America in recent years, but was also a notable proponent of more recent and self-consciously modern compositions by Mascagni and Leoncavallo as well as Puccini; he had also conducted some of the first performances of Wagner's operas in Latin America. At the same time, his close friendship with Verdi, and his strong reputation amongst new Italian

[83] See *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 22 January 1893, 50.
[84] Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* (1893) and *La bohème* (1896), and Leoncavallo's *Zazà* (1900*)* are all prominent examples.
[85] Gemma Bellincioni has often been credited with starting the trend for a crinoline-wearing Violetta, in the 1886 La Scala production that marked her "breakthrough" performance; yet surviving reviews of the premiere make little mention of costumes, instead directing critical ire at the poor direction of the chorus. Julian Budden is the invariably cited source for this: *The Operas of Verdi, Vol 2: From Il Trovatore to La Forza del destino* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978; revised edition 1992), 121-2. On Bellincioni's Violetta, see Annamaria Cecconi, 'Stage Sisters: Gemma Bellincioni's Violetta and Eleonora Duse's Margherita', in *Women & Music* 19 (2015), 54-62. On the 1886 production, see for example *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 1 April 1883, 111; and *Il mondo artistico*, 10 April 1886.

composers, made him a natural choice to conduct the Verdi memorial celebrations – a visible link with the past that also gestured towards possible future paths.[86]

The costumes and staging for the production were designed by Luigi Sapelli, better known as "Caramba". A distinguished Turin costumier later responsible for the majority of La Scala's designs in the 1920s – he was initially favoured by Puccini to design the costumes for *Turandot* – his scenic overhaul of *La traviata* was widely acknowledged as a break with an earlier tradition; one that sought to confer on the production an unprecedented aesthetic unity (see Fig. 4.3).[87] "The show pleased everyone in all of its components – a truly new and magnificent show", declared *Corriere della sera*: "*La traviata* has never had a more beautiful or complete scenic staging, nor been performed with greater expressivity or evenness"; while *Il secolo* more modestly observed that "the staging and the wardrobe – costumes not à la Louis XIII as usual, but in the style of around 1845 [*sic*] – was worthy of La Scala".[88] Elsewhere, *Il mondo artistico* expressed relief that the aesthetic inconsistencies of the past had finally been abandoned: "That abominable anachronism, decreed by tradition, that performs *La traviata* with the costumes in the style of Louis XIII, or the style of today, or even worse an unrealistic mixture of both, has given way to a wonderful picture of costumes of the 1840s, which render the drama of Dumas more logical."[89] References to "the style of today" suggest that *La traviata* had in fact occasionally been subject to stagings more overtly influenced by verismo trends; yet if so they had left little trace on Milan's critical community, for whom the opera's staging tradition was firmly wedded to the seventeeth or eighteenth century. In drawing the musical and visual components together around a single historical

[86] Mugnone conducted all of the operas around the Exposition, including Franchetti's work, and would later conduct *Nabucco* for the 1913 Verdi centenary at La Scala. On further performances in Latin America, see Susana Salgado, *The Teatro Solis: 150 Years of Opera, Concert and Ballet in Montevideo* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).
[87] On *Turandot,* see William Ashbrook and Harold Powers, *Puccini's Turandot: The End of the Great Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 141.
[88] "Lo spettacolo piacque a tutti in ogni sua parte - spettacolo veramente nuovo e magnifico. *La traviata* non ebbe mai più bella e completa rappresentazione scenica, nè esecuzione più di questa equilibrata ed espressiva", *Corriere della sera*, 4 February 1906; "La scenografia e il vestario (costumi non alla Luigi XIII come di solito, ma secondo la moda del 1845 circa) degni della Scala", *Il secolo*, 28 January 1906. References here and in other review to "Luigi XIII" suggest that stagings of *Traviata* had not always adhered to a strict c1700 setting, but could also slide back into a fictionalised seventeenth-century period as the long nineteenth century wore on.
[89] "Quell'abbominevole anacronismo che per tradizione faceva eseguire la *Traviata* coi costume alla Luigi XIII o alla moda d'oggi, o ancoro o peggio mescolando inverosimilmente lo due foggie, ha fatto luogo ad un mirabile quadro di costumi dei 1840, che rende più logico il drama di Dumas." *Il mondo artistico,* 1 February 1906.

moment, the staging was (for *L'arte melodrammatica*) "a real marvel": an otherworldly event that almost had the quality of an intercession.[90]

Fig. 4.3. Rosina Storchio as Violetta, *La traviata,* 1906. Archivio Storico Ricordi.

Critical reactions to the production in the Milanese press thus unanimously declared the performances a glorious memorial to Verdi – in the words of *La Lombardia*, "the last great Italian genius"; and verbal overlaps between a "messa in scena" and a "messa di requiem" were a recurring thread throughout reviews. For *Ars et labor* – Ricordi's house organ – the performances were demonstrably a success "such as we have not encountered in the glorious annals of the Milanese theatre"; and the historic nature of the occasion – in the

[90] "La messa in scena una vera meraviglia: assai ammirato, fra l'altri, e con ragione". *L'arte melodrammatica,* 12 February 1906.

sense of actively *making history* that would be remembered by future generations beyond Italy – likewise emerged in several other accounts.[91] For *La perseveranza*, the performance would "bring new prestige to the theatre, and add another golden page to the many that have created our theatre's worldwide fame".[92] As *Il sole* observed, such a performance could only be the object of jealousy for "theatres abroad" – a performance destined to circulate around the globe as part of the theatre's international mythology.[93] *Il mondo artistico* in turn asserted that the performances had done more than simply celebrate a great composer; they were an act of civic rediscovery:

> [W]e believe that the intensity of attention and enthusiasm that alternately accompanied all the events of the show the other night not only demonstrated admiration for the opera itself and its interpreters, but also an eruption of the Latin spirit that is below the skin of our public even when they adopt a future-orientated attitude. No, our tastes haven't evolved, and we say 'our' because we are ourselves Milanese; they have remained what they were twenty, thirty years ago: they are still for *Linda*, for *Il trovatore*, for *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and when we humbly ask for a little Wagner, we do it for reasons of snobbery, and when we enjoy *La Damnation de Faust*, it's in part because of the merits of flying ballerinas or some other no less surprising scenographic trickery.[94]

The production thus revived an earlier historical epoch – one in which *Linda* and *Barbiere* had not yet been superseded by international operatic novelties, nor by the symphonic repertoire that would soon dominate the Exposition. References to "twenty, thirty years ago" in turn cast an eye back to the immediate post-unification era – a moment before the gradual disillusion of the 1880s, when Milanese (and Italian) identity had perhaps seemed more

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[91] "Al teatro alla Scala continuano le rappresentazioni della *Traviata* con tale successo che non ha rincontro negli annali gloriosi del massimo teatro Milanese". "'La Traviata' al Teatro alla Scala", *Ars et labor*, March 1906, 244.

[92] "Fu una sera magnifica; piena pei tutti di profondi, intensi emozioni; una serata venuta ad apportare nuova prestigia al nostra Teatro, ad aggiungere un'altra pagina d'oro alle molte che costuniscono il patrimonia della sua fama mondiale". *La perseveranza*, 28 January 1906.

[93] "Della messa in scena e del senso d'arte che vi ha presieduto, dissi all'inizio di queste note affrettale. Essa è invidiabile dai più grandi e più progrediti Teatri dell'estero." *Il sole*, 28 January 1906.

[94] "E noi crediamo l'intensità di attenzione e l'entusiasmo che alternatamente hanno l'altra sera accompagnato tutto lo svolgersi dello spettacolo, aver bensì dimostrata ammirazione all'opera in sè stessa, e agli interpreti, ma anche un po' l'erompere di quello spirito latino ch'è a fior de pelle nel nostro pubblicho anche quando prende qualche atteggiamento avvenerista. No, i nostri gusti non sono affatto evoluti, e diciamo noi; sono rimasti quali erano venti, trenta anni or sono; essi sono ancora per la *Linda*, per il *Trovatore*, per il *Barbiere di Siviglia* e quando domandiamo umilmente un po'di Wagner, lo facciamo per snobismo, e quando ci divertiamo alla *Damnazione di Faust*, è un po'per merito delle ballerine che volano o di altri non meno sorprendenti trucchi scenici". *Il mondo artistico*, 1 February 1906.

steadily coherent, and could (retrospectively) be imagined as unthreatened by foreign influence. At the same time, critics noted that the performance had in fact confounded the expectations of some audience members in its sheer vitality: as the *Corriere della sera* argued, many beforehand had feared that the music would seem too old, the style too tired and that the performance was more an act of homage to a fallen master than a living part of Milan's present.[95] Instead, audiences had been brought back to a vanished era: the production was "a return to the past, a return to our youth and to that of our musical art", remarked *L'illustrazione italiana*. "The old melodies, that we sing in our hearts from the first years of our lives, seem born again, renewed with new charms."[96]

In the context of the wider Verdian festivities, operatic rhetoric unsurprisingly abounded. The event itself could even take on a further, quasi-operatic dimension for some visitors, as the production's artistic excellence was mediated through the symbolic position of Verdi himself and the history of Italian opera more broadly. For a reviewer of the second performance, the audience's applause was comparable to a "Rossinian crescendo", slowly but surely increasing in intensity until a final explosion at the curtain calls.[97] Elsewhere, the overlap between the opera's final act carnival-time setting and the premiere in late-January became the source of journalist speculation: as the critic in *La Lombardia* suggested, the opera was likely to become the chief attraction of Milan's own carnival celebrations.[98] Perhaps it was no surprise, therefore, that the only two movements in the opera that were encored were the preludes. Representations of Violetta's illness, the preludes cast the opera itself as a kind of historical enactment, a nostalgic look back at a beautiful life cut short. At once a theatrical depiction of death and a memorial to a composer, the *Traviata* production finally locked both into a fantasy of Italian opera in the mid-nineteenth century. For the critic in *Il sole*, therefore, a performance of *La traviata* was itself something that could evoke proud memories of the audience's grandfathers: an event allowing spectators to experience the

[95] *Corriere della sera*, 28 January 1906.
[96] "È stata una festa senza nubi; un ritorno al passato, un ritorno alla giovinezza nostra e della nostra arte musicale. Le vecchie melodie, che ci cantano nell'anima dagli anni prima della nostra vita, parvero rinascere rinnovate dai nuovi fascine; e la vecchia storia romantica d'amore ritrovò ancora le antiche emozioni nei cuori degli spettatori". "Rivista Teatrale", *L'illustrazione italiana*, 4 February 1906, 118.
[97] "La seconda rappresentazione della Traviata rinnovò e confermò il successo trionfale della prima [...] Gli applausi incominciarono subito – ai brindisi del primo atto e continuarono sino alla fine dell'opera con in crescendo rossiniano." *Corriere della sera*, 4 February 1906.
[98] "Riassumendo la serata do iersera, che segna il primo successo immediato della stagione e ha fatto riassaporare le belleze della "Traviata", resterà come uno spettacolo tipico di giubilo scaligero e forse l'opera sarà il caposaldo del carnevale". *La Lombardia*, 28 January 1906.

performance through the gaze of an imagined past.[99] Rather than being obsolete – a remnant of the past still pointlessly clinging on in the present – the production demonstrated the continued power of Verdi's music to excite Milanese audiences, and the composer's unique relationship with those same audiences; indeed as the *Lega Lombardia* critic noted, the powerful response of the public to the work was in stark contrast to the poor reception given to recent premieres, which had made La Scala seem a refuge for malcontents.[100] Only the statues in the entrance, the author asserted, static emblems of Milan's operatic history, had failed to be transformed by the power of the performance.[101] For *Il secolo,* in fact, audiences left the theatre breathing a sigh of relief – here at last was a durable masterpiece, a work that could transcend time and still move audiences generations after its premiere.[102]

Critical tropes surrounding the production, then, emphasised both the historical importance (and possible critical afterlife) of the production and the varying degrees to which audience members were sutured into the production's fantastical imagination of the operatic past – compelled to participate in a collective memorialisation in ways that at times blurred distinctions between the work and the performance event. Indeed, the historical distance from the opera's premiere also encouraged reflections on the opera's own journey in the intervening years, the "path of glory" that the opera had traversed from its debut in Venice in 1853 to its Milanese revival in 1906.[103] At the same time, however, the production's reality-effect was also periodically disturbed for some commentators by the traces of present-day performance practice that tore through the dramatic surface. This created a sense that, notwithstanding the production's aims of precise (albeit ersatz) historical re-enactment, both the vocal qualities of the singers and the opulence of the stage designs were in conflict with the imagined modesty of the operatic past. Not merely a museum piece, the work's fluid ontology raised problems for those who could see the trace of the present day all too clearly in the performance. For the *Lega Lombardia*, for example, the new costumes and scenography could not conceal that both the choice of voice types, and the opulence of the

[99] "E infatti – questo della "Traviata" – una spettacolo che rinnova il fastigio e la clezione d'arte scaligera di cui s'inorgogliosce il ricordi dei nostri nonni." *Il sole,* 28 January 1906.
[100] "Sia lodato il cielo che il genio verdiano ha rotto solennemente la tradizione di musoneria che di premiere in premiere minacciava di transformare la Scala in un club degli eterni malcontenti!". *Lega Lombardia,* 28 January 1906.
[101] Ibid.
[102] "Ieri, ricorrendo il quinto anniversario della morte del grande Verdi, la Scala ebbe il felice pensiero di darci la premiere della Traviata con la Storchio, il Sobinoff e la Stracciari. La sala gremita era un incanto di bellezza muliebre, uno splendore abbagliante di toilettes, ed offriva tutti la solenne imponenza di una serata eccezionale […] Quella di ieri fu la prima sera della stagione in cui il pubblico uscendo dal teatro mandasse (e non era tempo!) un respiro di sollievo." *Il secolo,* 28 January 1906.
[103] *La rassegna melodrammatica,* 31 January 1906.

stage designs were in conflict with the audience's imagination of the 1840s, to the point of almost invading the "homely and modest spirit of our classical work".[104] The *Gazzetta dei teatri* similarly lamented that the staging was excessively opulent and anachronistic, despite the production's outward claims to realism, and notwithstanding its seductive visual beauty.[105] Surviving sketches of figurines from the production do indicate a surprisingly rich royal blue outfit with neck tie for Alfredo in Act One, and an ostentatious white and cream ball gown decorated with pearls for Violetta in the impoverished setting of the third act; the Act Two gypsies similarly sport outfits more suited to Ottoman royalty, suggesting that efforts at historical accuracy in the production were intertwined with a clear desire for luxury display.[106] Storchio's performance elsewhere came in for extravagant praise by many journalists; and yet the attention lavished both on the soprano and on the conductor underlined precisely those elements that belonged to the post-Verdian era. If the conducting of Mugnone was enough to prompt one writer to wish that Verdi had been there to attend the performance – "to embrace him, he who loves and admires Verdi so much" – then trends in modern performance were nevertheless obtrusive enough partially to break the spell.

Revived for the opening of the Exposition later that spring, the 1840s setting of the 1906 *La traviata* production on one level echoed other historical re-enactments and exotic entertainments found within international expositions more generally: examples of "spectacular visual-virtual ersatz realities" (in Geppert's words), that also sometimes included early period-performance experiments.[107] Understood in the context of the Exposition's other displays, the overlap between *La traviata*'s tragic narrative and the audience's quasi-operatic involvement in the staging – the collective fulfilment of an operatic funeral rite – would seem to offer an enticing parallel to the blurring of spaces associated

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[104] "la spirito modesto e casalingo della nostra opera classica". The complete statement raises concerns about the future implications of theatrical updating: "Cosi ancora l'azione scenica – un nobilissimo canovaccio per la abbondante vena musicale dei nostri vecchi – assurge poco a poco nelle moderne riproduzioni scaligere ad invadere quasi il campo musicale […] Per ultimo l'allestimento rinnovato nelle scene, nei costumi, nella disposizione dei quadri è divenuto un altro punto capitale delle riproduzioni antiche alla Scala; ed anche qui – non se n'abbia a male la benemerita direzione – si è andati in tale eccesso da urtare decisamente contro la spirito modesto e casalingo della nostra opera classica […] La scena mimica è toccante, non le neghiamo; ma di questo passo, di aggiunta in aggiunta, dove finiremo?" *Lega Lombardia*, 28 January 1906.

[105] "Ottimi tutti gli altri e sfarzosa oltre ogni dire la mess in scena, la quale forse ha peccato di soverchio lusso e di qualche incongruenza. Troppa grandiosità, per esempio, nella sala in casa di Flora, che non era certo una Principessa Reale – troppo ricchezza nella camera di Violetta, il cui peculio era ridotto a venta luigi – troppa primaverilità in quel giardino, data la stagione invernale." *Gazzetta dei teatri*, 1 February 1906.

[106] These figurines are now held at the Archivio Storico Ricordi, at Milan's Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense: they can be viewed online at https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/it/people/display/61?mode=iconografia&relatedWorks=+La+Traviata, accessed 2 February 2019.

[107] Geppert, *Emigrant Nation*, 11. On period performance at expositions, see Fauser, *Musical Encounters*, 27-41.

with the Exposition previously mentioned: the operatic past and the Milanese present interacting in the space of the theatre, with both transformed by the encounter. Rather than maintaining a historical distance, many audience members were instead immersed in an alternative operatic reality, brought headily back to the 1840s and all the associations of an operatic golden age. Interpreted in the context of the Exposition, *La traviata* would also seem especially appropriate for a meditation on the spectacular dimensions of modern Milanese reality: not merely set in Paris (and preoccupied with the collective social gaze), the opera also continually collapses the divide between interior physical space and urban sound, transforming Violetta's body into a resonant echo chamber for her Parisian milieu.[108] Understood in those terms, the *La traviata* production could offer contemporary audiences an operatic revival that functioned as a kind of operatic "reality object" – briefly turning them from detached observers to active participants in a Verdian commemoration through the partial collapse of historical distance.[109]

Yet I would suggest it is precisely the ruptures and breakdowns in the production's verisimilitude, and the audience's *awareness* of a historical fiction, that are ultimately most revealing. As previously outlined, *La traviata*'s position as a proto-verismo work (and thus a pre-eminently modern opera) could only be enhanced by its updating to the mid-nineteenth century; repeated references to the "realism" of Storchio's performance throughout reviews underline precisely such a mediation of *La traviata* through later operatic works. The presence of both Storchio and Mugnone was moreover an indelible reminder of the future paths being taken by Italian opera and Italy itself in the New World, ones dramatically – indeed permanently – played out in Milan's urban landscape. While surviving reviews of the *La traviata* production make little mention of the performers' other appearances, the exceptionally active theatrical press in Milan – which reprinted telegrams on the opening nights of Storchio's performances in Argentina – ensured that international performances were almost as heavily mediated as those in Milan itself; indeed, Storchio's *La traviata* in

[108] See Emilio Sala's stimulating observations on "sonic subjectivisation" in the opera: *The Sounds of Paris in Verdi's La traviata*, trans. Delia Casadei (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 155. Milan's own efforts to fashion itself along the lines of Parisian modernity were underlined by a series of paintings on display at the Exposition by Pompeo Mariani, entitled "Vita Milanese", and including a depiction of a society ball named "La Violetta".

[109] Distinctions between active and passive spectatorship have of course been challenged by many scholars, most recently by Jacques Rancière in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009). What is crucial here, I would suggest, is the diminished sense of historical distance from the opera and the composer's epoch enabled by the production.

Buenos Aires that summer was also extensively reported.[110] *La traviata* itself was furthermore an opera that was at once undeniably Italian (and retrospectively Milanese, through Verdi's history with the city), yet also quintessentially international by virtue of its plot and long reception history. If Verdi's opera had once sought to capture the decadence of mid-nineteenth century Paris, *La traviata* was now the object of multiple histories and national appropriations: a work whose mobility made it a natural yet deeply problematic work for Milanese celebrations.

It was precisely this paradoxical position occupied by the 1906 staging, I would suggest, that accounted for its impact: its capacity to act as a kind of operatic diorama, one that could shift via the audience's perception between Milan's operatic past; a partial – yet still historically distanced – renovation in the present; and its possible future, international paths; paths that were nevertheless historically bound up with Italy in ways that complicated straightforward notions of progress or "renewal". At once nostalgic and forward-looking, the production simultaneously provided audiences with a variety of possible degrees of historical and imaginative distance: it could both be heard as a brief revival of the Verdian past (something both alluring and inescapably alien), and as a distinct break with operatic tradition: a performance that looked and sounded new, that signified Italian opera's future both in its echoes of contemporary works and the American profile of its performers, however much it was founded on the reinvention of the operatic past. It is in this interplay, then, that the production most productively offers an analogy with the Exposition's own historical and spatial imagination: not simply through its implication of the Milanese public in the theatrical event, but in the over-layering of different historical and geographical strata within the production itself. It was precisely these different dimensions of the production – the multiple anachronisms that persisted within the production and in relation to its performance space, despite its surface unity – that created a multitude of viewpoints for spectators. Ultimately, the production's success was rooted in its capacity to compress a number of contemporary operatic preoccupations into one aesthetic experience, in a way profoundly attuned to the Exposition's theatrical, Milan-centred configuration of time and space. The exposition, the city and the opera house emerge as mutually revealing sites of performance. If the wider musical life of the Exposition offered a problematic image of

[110] See for example "Rosina Storchio a Buenos Aires", *Il mondo artistico*, 1 October 1905, for a full-page article on the soprano's recent visit to the city. Storchio also joined Toscanini in Buenos Aires and Montevideo during the 1906 tour, when his company presented sixteen operas (including *Traviata* and the again unsuccessful *La figlia di Iorio*), earning a reported 500,000 lira. See "Notizie Teatrali", *Corriere della sera*, 26 September 1906.

Milanese modernity for some visitors, this *La traviata* could offer a site of articulation for these contemporary operatic concerns: the Milanese operatic chronotope in material form.[111]

Viva Verdi

On 11 November 1906, the Exposition finally closed. Despite discussions concerning the future of the Exhibition of Italians Abroad, the Exposition's only permanent legacy within the city was the fish farming pavilion that now houses the city's aquarium. By November, Storchio and Mugnone had returned from their regular tour to Latin America and La Scala was busy preparing its new season with *Carmen* and the much-anticipated premiere of *Salome*. *La traviata*, though, continued to prosper with Caramba's designs, even if the work chosen for Verdi's centenary celebrations at La Scala in 1913 was *Nabucco*: an opera heavy with Risorgimento mythology and also intimately identified with Milan. Soon the "Luigi XIII" tradition would drift into operatic history, replaced by staging trends never witnessed by Verdi in his lifetime, but that nonetheless came to embody a vaguely defined notion of historical authenticity. Removed from its original context, the "1840s" staging became normalised and eventually every bit as familiar as the c1700 setting had previously been; in an ironic foreshadowing of the Zeitoper movement two decades later, the effort to be retrospectively up-to-date doomed the production to one historical moment.[112] Yet, as previously outlined, the *La traviata* production's contemporaneity was already a half century out of step when it debuted in 1906, positioning the staging in the curious state of the conditional perfect. Whereas the recording technologies and musical instruments on display at the Exposition promised to reproduce sounds in the future, the production instead offered something that had never been – something nevertheless experienced as an extraordinary moment of civic operatic commemoration.

The implications of this are both specific to Milan (and ideas of *italianità*), and also more generally revealing of the period. Considered in the context of the Exposition, the 1906 *La traviata* at one level suggests that preoccupations about the past and the future within Milanese contemporary society and musical culture should be considered more closely through the lens of geography; and in particular the growing importance of the Americas.

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[111] The term "chronotope" refers to the particular configuration of time and space in fiction, and is derived from Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M.*, trans. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Geppert also draws upon the concept in his concluding remarks on expositions.

[112] On the temporal conundrum of Zeitoper, see Alexander Rehding, "On the Record", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18/1 (2006), 59–82.

Questions about the city's identity, and about the relationship more broadly between Italian identity and music, were continually interrogated through a concern with cities such as Buenos Aires, a new Italy here represented by Mugnone and Storchio. Understood in these terms, the 1906 *Traviata* production might therefore be considered exemplary of the particular set of spatial preoccupations and associations attached to operatic spectatorship in Milan around the Exposition, and more generally during this period – ones that were significantly bound up with constructions of *italianità* and its contemporary circulation across the Atlantic. Only through a more mobile history of early-twentieth-century Italian opera, I would argue, can the performance's local impact truly be accounted for.

The success of the *Traviata* production – and its kinship with the Exposition – more broadly therefore offers an important reminder to pay greater attention to the importance of geography in considering operatic performances: an attentiveness not just to physical location (and an immediate set of architectural semiotics), but rather to the wider cultural and imaginative networks within which performances take place.[113] On a specifically local level, in other words, the production's success can draw us closer to a more historically and geographically informed understanding of operatic spectatorship in Milan at this time – to the nexus of associations and meanings that constituted operatic experience for audiences, and in particular their relationship with vexed notions of *italianità*. In a Lefebvrian vein, this set of ideas might even be termed the spatial (or global) imaginary of operatic spectatorship in Milan: a geographical imagination relating to opera in the city, that was here theatrically embodied by the 1906 *Traviata*, alongside all the historical associations that Verdi and *Traviata* also triggered. Yet beyond the specific example of *Traviata* and Milan, such an attentiveness to geography can alert us to the spatial encounters that individual performances provided for audiences in this period, ones that extended beyond the proscenium and stage to the operatic world beyond: the imaginative world constructed by the performance event. The La Scala *Traviata* can thus encourage us to think more carefully about the specific interventions that opera can make in local and collective understandings of space, and the temporal associations such constructions can prompt. The staging did more than simply tune in to a particularly Milanese operatic Zeitgeist and a set of concerns about the operatic future:

[113] A focus on the physical sites of performance and their meanings is by now a well-trodden path in performance theory and theatre studies: see for example Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theater Architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). For a study focused more explicitly on the relationship between the theatre and the alternative realities it represents, see Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

it implicitly made a claim for opera – and operatic *production* – in negotiating global relations: as a way to calibrate and assess forms of cultural and historical affiliation. And it did so at a moment when the international mobility of the operatic canon made the re-fashionability of operatic works a particularly resonant site for cultural stock-taking.[114]

What is ultimately at stake here is therefore an early instance of operatic "glocalisation": the recreation of globalised commodities in local ways, here by the very nation that first produced the operatic commodity. Yet more interestingly, perhaps – and more specifically theatrical and *operatic* in dimension – is the emergent sense of opera's power to exemplify particular localities on an experiential level. Like the exposition, the production was an immersive, theatrical event that reflected a particular imagination of time and space within a distinct locale: one in which perceptions of the past and future were bound up with specific geographical ties. Rather than simply reflecting local tastes through the adaptation of costumes or texts, the performances instead created a specifically Milanese imaginative world, in a way profoundly similar to the exposition. Operatic production, within the 1906 *Traviata*, emerges as a site in which perceptions of historical change and geographical meaning can be embodied in a spectacular form: one implicating the audience in a process of self-discovery and re-invention.

This is not to credit Caramba, Storchio, Mugnone, the La Scala management (or for that matter Verdi himself, beyond the grave) with singular agency nor a specific agenda, but rather to locate the production's collective impact precisely in its resonance with local cultural politics. Although the mise-en-scène was always already out-of-date, the production was supremely of its time: in its memorialisation of Italy's operatic past and its assertion of Verdi's unique relationship with Milanese cultural identity; its valorisation of Paris and its efforts at modernisation; and the American future promised, yet also threatened, by its lead performers. The parallels between the Exposition and the *La traviata* production are ultimately revealing not because of any explicit forms of authorial intention, but because both events emerged from a distinct local set of preoccupations. Their contiguity sheds light on opera's particular affordances at this historical moment. If expositions functioned as fleeting cities, ones that briefly echoed and transformed the cities in which they were erected, then operatic performances could on occasion act as fleeting expositions: phantasmagoria that

[114] On the emergence of the operatic canon, see the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook to the Operatic Canon*, ed. Cormac Newark & William Weber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

fluctuated between past and present, local and global, and that had the potential to reconfigure audiences' relationships with time and space.

Perhaps attending to a historical moment such as the 1906 *La traviata* – an event with tantalising if incomplete echoes of more radical latter-day experiments in operatic updating – might then also alert us further to some of the other less visible, yet no less important agents in shaping later operatic developments. To the role of local politics and local preoccupations in shifting theatrical culture; to performers, audiences, journalists and civic authorities as constitutive forces in shaping a discursive framework for a production's novelty; and to the importance of operatic production as a site of urban redefinition and reinscription. Shifts in operatic staging, in other words, might be reconsidered in terms of a new understanding of a globalised operatic repertory and operatic community, in which perceptions of a local musical culture were being rapidly reshaped.[115] Within Milan, such an interplay of different forces is outlined in a *Traviata* production that at once memorialised the operatic past, yet also traced possible paths for opera's future, in ways that echoed the Exposition's own Milanese imagination. Above all, attending to such inchoate experimentalism might alert us to opera's scope for textualising or embodying local, national and transnational relations at the fin-de-siècle, and for operatic production's capacity to reclaim or remake local conceptions of global space. Ultimately, the production's significance resides precisely in its ambiguous position, caught on the cusp between nostalgia and an orientation towards the future; between a world already passed, and one yet to come.

[115] Gundula Kreuzer has addressed some of these issues in her exploration of early examples of Verdian operatic adaptation in Germany, especially in the context of changing religious attitudes: "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos* and the modern stage", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18/2 (2006), 151-79. The shift I want to note here is instead the reimagination of familiar operatic works in light of a thoroughly globalised operatic repertory.

Chapter Five

Making History: Mascagni, Montemezzi, and the Italian-American Canon

O rondinella nata in oltremare!

- Giovanni Pascoli

The summer of 1911 was a heady time in Rome. Celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of Italian unification reached their climax on 4 June with the inauguration of a monument to Vittorio Emanuele II between Piazza Venezia and the Capitoline Hill. In the words of Prime Minister Giolitti, the monument would remind citizens of the "greatest event in the history of the Italy", and the advances the nation had made "in every field of civic progress and in the world's esteem".[1] Efforts to mobilise the Risorgimento for current political ends were hardly new. As numerous scholars have shown, these moves involved the appropriation of discrete elements from a highly distended and contradictory historical process; and during the 1911 celebrations efforts were directed at presenting the Liberal state and the Savoy monarchy as twin guardians of the unification project.[2] Garibaldi, Cavour, Mazzini and Vittorio Emanuele II were architects of a single national vision in this narrative, and the present political order the desired outcome of a decades-long struggle for independence. Republican sympathies and inter-regional tensions – between North and South, Church and state – were sidelined in favour of a patriotic image of the monarchic state.

Symptoms of discontent could not be entirely suppressed. Socialists had organised a series of public transport strikes and protests in the preceding months, while several other groups dissociated themselves from the wider festivities: both Catholics offended by the "annexation" of Rome, and Republicans angered by the adoption of Mazzini as part of a monarchist pantheon.[3] But there were other amusements on offer apart from the sight of the

[1] Giovanni Giolitti, *Discorsi Extraparlamentari: Saggio introduttivo di Nino Valeri* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952), 254-6. Giolitti's speech is discussed and cited in Rosario Forlenza & Bjørn Thomassen, "Resurrections and rebirths: how the Risorgimento shaped modern Italian Politics", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 22/3 (2017), 291-313.
[2] See Albert Russell Ascoli & Krystyna Von Henneberg, eds., *Making and Re-making Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and Rosario Forlenza & Bjørn Thomassen, *Italian Modernities: Competing Narratives of Nationhood* (London: Palgrave, 2016). Forlenza and Thomassen's book (and the article derived from it) are indebted to Jan Assmann's concept of "cultural memory", a form of collective identity formation and stabilisation through a period of rapid historical change. See Jan Assmann, *Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1992).
[3] See Forlenza & Thomassen, "Resurrections and rebirths", on the protests surrounding the 1911 festivities.

enormous (and then still unfinished) Risorgimento monument. Barely a week after the inauguration, Rome's Teatro Constanzi hosted the first Italian performances of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* (1910), attended by the royal family and an international audience. The Italian premiere on 12 June was planned as the highlight of a season of operatic works around the Jubilee, with Toscanini, Mugnone and Luigi Mancinelli sharing conducting duties.[4] In such a context, it is no surprise that Puccini's work was rapturously received, with the composer invited to receive congratulations from the monarch in the royal box.[5] For many critics, the operatic festival – and in particular *Fanciulla*'s premiere – was evidence of the nation's creative strength, and the continuity between the Risorgimento era and the present day.[6] Even in this nationalist climate, however, it did not take long before familiar critical divisions began to emerge: between those who condemned Puccini as insufficiently melodic and excessively cosmopolitan; and those like Giuseppe Adami who praised the opera as "Italian, healthy in an Italian way". As Alexandra Wilson has shown, *Fanciulla*'s Italian reception was suffused with longstanding anxieties about modern Italian musical style, here aggravated further by the Wild West subject matter and moments of musical exoticism.[7]

By 1911, concerns about *Fanciulla*'s national standing were already a familiar theme. As the Metropolitan Opera's first world premiere – one based on American subject matter and set in the USA – Puccini's opera was unsurprisingly interrogated at its first performances by many New York critics in search of its "American" markings. The combination of Caruso, Toscanini and Pasquale Amato in the ensemble all underlined the opera's Italian provenance, while Italian and US flags placed throughout the auditorium celebrated cultural union. But efforts to identify American themes were pervasive.[8] For émigré audiences in New York, the opera appears to have served as a further vehicle of nostalgia, with Jake Wallace's opening song easily lending itself to diasporic identification, in ways less obvious in the Italian

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[4] The works presented included *Guillaume Tell*, *Don Pasquale*, *Aida* and *La sonnambula*, as well as Ponchielli's *Figliuol prodigo* and Catalani's early one-act work *La falce*. See "Corriere Teatrale: i tre periodi di spettacoli al "Costanzi" durante l'Esposizione del 1911", *Corriere della sera*, 20 July 1910, 3 (a news report reprinted from Rome's *Giornale d'Italia*).

[5] See Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 162.

[6] For a summary of reviews, see "'La fanciulla del West' al Costanzi di Roma", *Ars et labor*, July 1911, 557-8. In the author's opinion, Italian reviews "did not merely repeat the words of praise which the American press first, and then the English have paid to the latest opera by Giacomo Puccini; they have intensified them".

[7] Ibid. Adami's comments were made in "Il grande successo della *Fanciulla del West* al Constanzi", *La perseveranza*, 13 June 1911, 2; cited in Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 162.

[8] See Annie J. Randall & Rosalind Gray Davis, *Puccini and The Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For a more recent study, see Kathryn M. Fenton's forthcoming *Puccini's* La fanciulla del West *and American Musical Identity* (London: Ashgate, 2019).

reception.[9] But overall, as Wilson summarises, "the opera's music was perceived as 'un-American' by American critics and 'un-Italian' by their colleagues across the Atlantic", with diasporic audiences alone locating a specific cultural resonance in the opera's dramaturgy.[10] Rather than opening up a space for Italo-American hybridity, in fact, *Fanciulla* appears to have exposed major cultural differences: ones played out through differing constructions of a national operatic canon.

Despite its mixed national profile, Puccini's opera was undoubtedly the object of triumphalist statements during its New York run, with many critics stressing the importance of an operatic premiere on the New York stage, as well as Puccini's wider interest in American themes. The opera's muted critical reception, and its swift disappearance from the Met stage, nonetheless position it as something of a problem case: a work that hinted at an Italian opera's inclusion in a specifically American canon, yet ultimately remained too topical – too rooted in specifically *American* contexts – to smooth over national differences. As the opera travelled south to Buenos Aires in July 1911, such impressions were largely reaffirmed, with commentators remarking on the opera's unusual mix of styles and its lukewarm welcome from its Argentine audience.[11] In spite of such disappointments, however, *Fanciulla*'s mixed reception is revealing of the shifting priorities of operatic canon-building in the Americas by the 1910s: a situation focused less on the accumulation of foreign works premiered abroad, than on a uniquely American role in shaping the repertory; one that could influence the consumption of opera elsewhere, while constructing a pantheon of specifically American composers and works. Efforts to encourage local composers to compose "national" works were a familiar theme by this period in both New York and Buenos Aires, with such projects continuing well into the twentieth century. *Fanciulla*'s history can instead alert us to efforts to include foreign composers in a specifically local canon; and towards works often overlooked in Italian operatic histories.

At one level, of course, *Fanciulla*'s foreign premiere was nothing new. In the previous half century and more, Verdi's *I masnadieri* (1847), *La forza del destino* (1862), *Don Carlos* (1867) and *Aida* (1871) had all enjoyed celebrated debuts on non-Italian soil. Yet

[9] See Kunio Hara, "Nostalgia and the American reception of *La fanciulla del West*", conference paper delivered at Tosc@Bologna conference, July 2015. Emanuele Senici gestures at this line of interpretation in *Landscape and Gender in Italian Opera: The Alpine Virgin from Bellini to Puccini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 247-50.
[10] Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 164.
[11] "La fanciulla del West", *La Nación*, 26 July 1911, 2.

these occasions undoubtedly held a more problematic position in the post-unification area, with critics lamenting the unpatriotic decision to follow international theatres, and with new operatic centres beyond Europe (and its borders) offering attractive opportunities. If Puccini's opera proved only a partial success, other Italian works were significantly more fortunate in being positioned as part of a uniquely Italian-American canon. Three seasons later, the New York premiere of Italo Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re* (1913) was ecstatically received by the local press, following a successful if relatively ordinary debut at La Scala. In the estimation of several critics, in fact, it was the finest new Italian opera composed since Verdi, one that heralded a new era in operatic history. In Buenos Aires, meanwhile, the world premiere of Mascagni's *Isabeau* (1911) at the Teatro Coliseo – performed during a lengthy visit by the composer – provoked extravagant Argentine hopes in the composer, prefiguring his later remaking as the musical leader of Mussolini's fascist regime.[12]

In what follows, I therefore consider alternative constructions of the Italian operatic canon in the years immediately preceding the Great War, and in particular American efforts to shape an Italian-American equivalent. By the 1910s the economic relationship between Buenos Aires, New York and Milan had shifted decisively towards American superiority, and these tensions played out in the shaping of modern operatic history. Critics, publishers and institutional managements all played major roles in defining these narratives, and the adulation and promotion of specific works was clearly tied to broader operatic agendas.[13] Yet public reaction by a range of social groups also played a significant role – not least in informing assessments of an opera's cosmopolitan appeal. To that end, I first examine the reception of *Isabeau* and *L'amore dei tre re* in Buenos Aires and New York, before returning to Milan to consider the impact of this transatlantic discourse on Italian musical narratives, at a time of intense interest in the Italian musical past and its future developments. The politics of operatic culture in Italy during the early 1910s have been the subject of several major recent studies, by Ben Earle, Marco Capra, Fiamma Nicolodi, Axel Körner and Wilson; yet

[12] As Roger Flury observes, "Within two years, *Isabeau* achieved over 400 performances, and it remained most popular in South America. In Italy, *Isabeau* retained a foothold in the repertory until World War II, after which time it virtually disappeared from the stage". See his *Pietro Mascagni: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 13.

[13] The emergence of an operatic (and more broadly musical) canon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been the subject of extensive research: in addition to the works already cited in Chapter One, see Katharine Ellis, "Olivier Halanzier and the Operatic Museum in Late Nineteenth-Century France", *Music and Letters* 96/3 (2015), 390-417, which highlights aims that the Palais Garnier should be a repository for great international (and not merely French) works. My concern here is both with the familiarity of this musical culture by the early twentieth century, and with the impact of cosmopolitanism on national canon formations. For a recent study on musical cosmopolitanism, see the roundtable convened by Dana Gooley, "Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Nationalism, 1848-1914", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66/2 (2013), 523-49.

the extent to which such debates were informed by foreign activity has remained relatively obscure.[14] If the direction of Italian music was hotly debated, I would argue, such concerns were inseparable from the transatlantic networks within which composers operated; and from the varied appropriations of Italian opera by critics and impresarios across the Atlantic.

Isabeau and Romantic Revival

Mascagni's *Isabeau* was a project long in gestation. Luigi Illica's libretto had been completed as early as 1903 and had been offered unsuccessfully to several composers including Puccini and Franchetti.[15] When Mascagni accepted the text in 1908, the decision was depicted by the composer as a clear attempt to break away from contemporary subject matter, highlighted most recently by the largely unsuccessful *Amica* (1905), a French-language opera set in 1900s Savoy. *Isabeau*'s medieval setting, and its emphasis on sensory abandon – most obvious in the climactic naked riding scene, accompanied by a rich soundscape of bells – were described by Mascagni shortly before its premiere as an effort to recover "the Romanticism that inspired so much of Italian opera", away from topical subject matter that had made him famous.[16] More obviously, it also reflected the influence of Wagnerian music drama and idealist aesthetics, with Isabeau and Folco's love death (and rejection of visible reality) offering a clear Italian counterpart to Tristan and Isolde.

Isabeau's plot is a loose retelling of the Lady Godiva legend, here refashioned as a story of female victimhood (and with clear pre-echoes of Illica's libretto for Puccini's *Turandot*).[17] Isabeau's father, King Raimondo, is anxiously looking for a husband for his daughter to secure his throne. A tournament has been held to invite suitors, encouraged by royal advisor Cornelius, but Isabeau refuses all who approach and seek to seduce her with

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[14] Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *La critica musicale in Itala mella prima metà del Novecento*, ed. Marco Capra & Fiamma Nicolodi (Venice: Marsilio Casa della Musica, 2011); Wilson, *The Puccini Problem;* Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 221-84.

[15] Alan Mallach explores the genesis of *Isabeau*, and its debts to Wagner, in *The Autumn of Italian Opera* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), 311-13.

[16] Cited in Michele Girardi, "Isabeau", Grove Music online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000005797. Accessed 13 November 2018.

[17] Illica was clearly inspired by Lord Tennyson's poem on the legend, a source for several pre-Raphaelite paintings; Tennyson was mentioned in several Italian reviews of *Isabeau*. On Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelite's Italian reception, see *The Reception of Alfred Tennyson in Europe*, ed. Leonee Ormond (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), especially Giuliana Pieri's chapter "The Critical reception of Tennyson in Italy", 85-104.

their eyes. As a punishment, she is condemned to ride naked through the city. The people of the city persuade the king that all must stay inside to avoid shaming Isabeau further: anyone who looks at her will be immediately blinded and put to death. The innocent falconer, Folco – a mystical figure most comfortable in the woods – deliberately looks at Isabeau and is condemned. Visiting him in prison, Isabeau initially rejects his advances but is finally seduced by Folco, with his direct appreciation of nature and beauty. She seeks his pardon from Raimondo, but he is executed anyway by Cornelius's will, and Isabeau commits suicide over his expiring body.

Mascagni's score is notable above all for its eclecticism. A pastiche medieval motet for minor characters Ermyngarde and Ermyntrude in the third act contrasts with lyrical set-pieces for Folco and Isabeau, in particular the tenor's opening aria "Tu ch'odi lo mio grido". Elsewhere, Mascagni clearly aspired towards a through-composed music drama, with the long final duet for soprano and tenor, "I tuoi occhi", highly similar in outline to the climactic encounter between Turandot and Calaf in Puccini's final work. Most striking are the contrasts between the prosaic music composed for the townspeople and the wicked Cornelius, and the hyper-lyrical, chromatic writing for Folco and the orchestra – aspects of the score which most clearly suggest Wagner's influence. If Folco functions as a kind of noble savage or idiot savant – a woodland figure uncorrupted by society, and capable of mystical insights – then he is depicted largely through a post-1850s lens, marked not by folk tunes but rather by augmented fourths and declamatory writing in the tenor's upper register. In a similar vein, Mascagni's orchestra frequently depicts events that are largely unseen, above all in the richly sonorous intermezzo depicting Isabeau's horse ride. Church bells associated with Isabeau's chastity resound throughout the scene, as a sonic substitute for the soprano's discreetly concealed nudity. As Roger Flury has suggested, *Isabeau* in some way thus constituted an attempt to bring together disparate elements of Mascagni's musical interests: a publicly advertised interest in Wagner's works, with a nostalgia for Italian operatic practices of the previous century.[18]

The decision to premiere *Isabeau* in Buenos Aires emerged in response to several long-running crises in Mascagni's career.[19] As director of Rome's Teatro Constanzi for the 1909-10, Mascagni had enjoyed an enormous success with works including *Iris* and

[18] See Roger Flury's article "Isabeau" (program note for Opera Holland Park 2018 production of the work).
[19] On *Isabeau*'s protracted genesis, see Alan Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his Operas* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 171-93.

Cavalleria alongside operas by Verdi, Wagner, Bellini, Rossini and Leoncavallo. Mascagni had been appointed to the Rome directorship by Walter Mocchi, one of the key stockholders in the Società Teatrale Internazionale that managed the syndicate between several Italian and Argentine theatres developing since the early twentieth century. The Società had purchased the Costanzi in 1908 and under Mascagni's control the theatre's appearance and musical standards had been substantially improved, to the delight of audiences and critics. Unpopular with the board, however, the appointment lasted only a season. At the same time, Mascagni had embarked on a love affair with Anna Lolli that caused severe delays to the opera's orchestration. As Alan Mallach has shown, a contract with H. Liebler and Company to pursue a five-month tour of the USA – including the world premiere of *Isabeau* – was informally broken in late 1910. The offer by Walter Mocchi to pursue an extended tour in South America instead – one renumerated far more generously than an Italian premiere – was a prime opportunity to balance the books and to banish memories of the disastrous earlier transatlantic investment.[20]

The existence of the Società was a clear indicator of the economic opportunities presented for Italian opera professionals throughout Argentina, as well as the administrative complexities still posed by transatlantic business (and which the Società was intended to ease).[21] Theatres within Italy managed by the syndicate included the Teatro Regio in Turin, Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice and Parma's Teatro Regio, as well as the Petruzzelli theatre in Bari; Buenos Aires's Teatro Coliseo was brought into the syndicate in 1910, with the Teatro Colón eventually falling under Mocchi's control between 1915-1925. By coordinating the seasons of key theatres in Italy and Argentina, the syndicate aimed to provide a clear channel for Italian musicians and technicians to move back and forth between winter seasons, while maintaining Italian control over a rapidly expanding Argentine industry. The Società's aims were in that sense driven as much by conservative cultural politics as liberal market practices: by regulating the flow of people and goods between theatres, the syndicate aimed to control fees, ease working difficulties, and stem the flow of singers drifting away from Italy towards

[20] As Mallach summarises, "[a] Latin American tour run by the experienced Mocchi offered few of the uncertainties that bedeviled Mascagni's ill-fated 1902 North American tour". Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his Operas*, 193.

[21] On the Società Teatrale Internazionale, see Matteo Paoletti, "Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno: La Società Teatrale Internazionale (1908-1931) e i suoi protagonisti" (PhD dissertation, Università di Bologna, 2015), especially 32-225 on its emergence and the first Roman season. Paoletti's dissertation focuses largely on its Italian presence rather than its Argentine wing. On Mocchi, see also Diana Giacometti, "La figura dell'impresario musicale: Walter Mocchi e la costruzione di un'industria operistica fra Italia e Sud America" (Tesi di Laurea, Università Ca'Foscari Venezia, 2013).

American houses. Seen in that context, the fact that Mocchi and the Società initially secured control of the Coliseo – rather than the more famous Colón – was especially important. Even if they could not prevent celebrities from favouring the re-opened theatre, the Coliseo could at least claim to be offering an "authentically" Italian operatic experience for Argentine audiences – one that was nonetheless fundamentally determined by the economic possibilities of the Latin American capital.

The tensions surrounding the premiere of *Isabeau* outline this situation especially clearly. As Matteo Paoletti has demonstrated, several Italian theatres sought to secure the first performance of Mascagni's work, with offers from Turin being followed by direct approaches from the Roman mayor to include the opera in the 1911 Risorgimento celebrations.[22] These overtures fell on deaf ears following the difficulties of the earlier season, and Buenos Aires remained the site of the world premiere as expected, preceded by a dress rehearsal in Genoa on 10 April 1911. As Mascagni confessed in his reply to the mayor, Rome held special significance for him as the site of his public arrival as a composer, but "I don't intend that people who are miserable in heart and mind will once again indulge in creating difficulties for *Isabeau*'s performance, as happened on a recent occasion."[23] Such disputes were not restricted to private communications. News of *Isabeau*'s foreign premiere (as well as that of *Fanciulla*) had been the source of significant grumbling in the Italian musical press, especially in light of the Unification festival, and Mascagni had resisted all calls to communicate further news. The decision by Mascagni and Puccini to accept American offers could at one level be painted as straightforwardly mercenary and unpatriotic; but other more artistic reasons also raised their head. Writing in *Il mondo artistico*, one commentator lamented:

> Both *Isabeau* and *La fanciulla del West*, the latest creations of our two greatest composers, will have their baptism outside of Italy. Here we will certainly not engage with or discuss the financial or artistic reasons that led to the performance of this beautiful ceremony outside of the country where the two creatures were born. But a curious feeling of envy can't but arise

[22] See Paoletti, "Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno", 228-37.
[23] "Siccome però non intendo che persone misere di mente e di cuore si sbizzarriscano ancora una volta a creare difficoltà per la esecuzione di Isabeau come è avvenuto in una occasione recente tengo a dichiarare formalmente che posso fino da ora garantire la rappresentazione della mia opera in Roma prima della partenza alla metà di aprile per il Sud America." Archivio Storico Capitolino, Roma, XI , b. 54, fasc. 5: Telegram from Pietro Mascagni to Ernesto Nathan, 23 February 1911, cited in Paoletti, "Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno", 236.

> from the idea that others will welcome the first voices, first smiles, and first sobs of the two creatures.
>
> Because both of these protagonists, whose history we've known through the narration of those who drape them in music and song, both these favourite daughters of Mascagni and Puccini (the last born are always the most caressed) will make their official entry into the world in a few days time, and will repeat to listeners their fictional or historic (or almost historic) life in times gone by.[24]

Images of *Isabeau* and *Fanciulla* as newly-born children offer a blatant, if not embarrassingly sentimental reflection of the hopes invested in the operas (while echoing rhetoric regarding emigrant offspring).[25] If the author's stated aim was to avoid raking over the "financial or artistic" motivations behind foreign premieres, comments on the works' geneses go some way towards outlining the problem. Desperate for information on the two operas, the author reports that "those who have heard some of these two pieces of music say, for example: 'This time Mascagni finally gives us his masterpiece!'". Acknowledging the muted public reception of Mascagni's more recent works – even when musicians were "always enthusiastic about the author of *Cavalleria*" – the article charts the desperate hunt for news of the operas, and Mascagni and Puccini's refusal to share any information. Finally, frustration with the secrecy overflows:

> Behold: this reluctance on the part of Pietro Mascagni is another reason that we can't celebrate: But why? Not only will the opera not be presented first in Italy, but nor does he even want to speak of it, before it's given its performance in North America?
>
> Isn't this, perhaps, a bit ungrateful towards us, who have demonstrated all of our enthusiasm, who have shouted his name in the hurrahs of a thousand glorious evenings?

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[24] "Tanto *Isabeau* che la *Fanciulla del West*, le ultimate creazioni dei nostri due maggiori compositori, avranno il loro battesimo fuori dell'Italia. E noi qui non tratteremo nè discuteremo certo delle ragioni di indole finanziaria o artistica che hanno deciso lo svolgimento della bella cerimonia fuori del paese ove le due creature nacquero: ma un curiosi sentimento di piccola invida non può non prenderci all'idea che altri accoglieranno le prime voci ed i primi sorrisi ed i primi singhiozzi delle due creature.

Poichè ambedue queste figure di protagoniste, la cui storia abbiamo conoscuita attraverso la narrazione stessa di coloro che quelle storie drappeggiarono di musica e di canti, ambedue queste predilette figliuole di Mascagni e di Puccini (gli ultimi nati son sempre i più carezzati) faranno fra qualche giorno il loro ingresso ufficiale nel mondo e ripeteranno agli ascoltatori quello che fu la loro vita immaginaria o storica o quasi storica di un tempo." "Due Crisalidi", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 October 1910, 1-2 (lead story)..

[25] On family networks within Italian emigration, see Franco Ramella, "Reti sociali, famiglie e strategie migratori", in *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana*, ed. Piero Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi & Emilio Franzina (Rome: Donzelli, 2002), 143-60.

> He gave us his music, his intelligence, his genius, and we were thankful to him; and we embrace him with our applause and write his name in a history that perhaps may never die.[26]

Heralded as the latest heroes in Italian operatic history, each new work comes saddled with the pressures of canonicity: ready to be inscribed in a list of works that will live forever. For Mascagni in particular, that problem was compounded by the years that had passed since *Cavalleria*'s early success; and the contradictory pressures on a composer to be both appropriately of the times, yet indelibly Italian, in a way weighted with an imagined past: "and that music, that music […] that music which sometimes makes you long for distant and even very distant times", as the article describes the audiences' musical taste. Finance clearly played a significant role in the composer's decisions, according to the author, and American dollars would give off a "rich glow" to match their new laurel wreaths. But the contradictory forces shaping Italian culture suggest that producing a satisfactory masterpiece to please the press would be virtually impossible. Premiering *Isabeau* in Argentina, then, meant not just escaping the interference of the Costanzi board, but also the feverish hopes (and criticisms) of the Italian musical establishment.[27]

The Argentine musical establishment were unsurprisingly more positive about *Isabeau*'s foreign birth. For at least two decades, declarations of Buenos Aires's exceptionally rapid development and the high quality of its operatic life had been coupled with periodic frustration at the appearance of established European failures during the winter season, and the slapdash quality of some performances. Shortly after Puccini's 1905 tour, *El Diario* had thus lamented that of the 55 performances at the Ópera that season, 19 had been of Puccini, 9 of Verdi, 4 of Gounod, 4 of Massenet, 4 of Berlioz, 3 of Mascagni, 2 of Mugnone, and no Wagner whatsoever; and while the performers were excellent, the management could not be considered to be making the most of them by presenting operas that had already failed elsewhere, most obviously *Edgar* and Mugnone's own composition.[28] Eight years earlier, *La patria degli italiani* had responded to complaints in *La Prensa* about

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[26] "Ecco: questa ristrosia di Pietro Mascagni era un'altra ragione che non poteva farci esultare: Ma come? Non solo l'opera non si darà in Italia, ma nemmeno vogliono parlarci, prima che in America del Nord se ne dia la prima rappresentazione? Non è, questa, forse, un poco di ingratitudine, verso di noi che gli demo tutto il nostro entusiasmo, che gridammo il suo nome nell'evviva di mille serate gloriose? Egli ci ha date la sua musica, la sua intelligenza, il suo genio e noi gliene fummo grati e lo coprimmo dei nostri applausi e scrivemmo il suo nome in una storia che forse non morirà." "Due Crisalidi".

[27] "E che i dollari s'intreccino coi loro bagliori, alle foglie di lauro: questo ci sembra un augurio completo, e sia bella profezia." Ibid.

[28] "Velada Teatral: Final de temporada", *El Diario*, 17 August 1905. The latter was almost certainly *Vita Brettona* (1904), also presented in Montevideo in the winter of 1905.

the limited repertory presented in the 1897 season by arguing that Buenos Aires's principal weakness was in fact musical excess – the variety of operas being performed militating against musical quality.[29] Even if Mascagni's arrival in 1911 did not mark the first operatic celebrity visiting the country, with Puccini an obvious precursor, *Isabeau*'s status as the first major international premiere did appear – like *Fanciulla* in New York – to mark a fundamental shift in Argentine and Italian power dynamics. No expense would be spared in celebrating Mascagni's (and *Isabeau*'s) arrival in the city: the race between Italy and Argentina was on.

Mascagni's tour comprised a wide range of his own works, with *Iris* and *Cavalleria* (paired with *Pagliacci*) presented alongside *Aida*, *Lohengrin* and *Il trovatore* in the first weeks of the Coliseo season under Mascagni's direction.[30] As one later reviewer asserted, *Cavalleria* had been popular everywhere, but nowhere more so than in Buenos Aires, and excitement surrounding Mascagni's new opera was unsurprisingly intense; when *Isabeau* finally arrived, every major newspaper offered extensive coverage (see Fig. 5.1). Particularly in the Italian-language press, expectations of a great masterpiece to match *Cavalleria* were hyperinflated – even though *Iris* had already been received with hyperbolic enthusiasm several years earlier.[31] "To you, our glory; to you, blacksmith of the sweetest harmonies; to you, Pietro Mascagni, on this eve of battle, while in your soul quivers the ardour and anxiety of the battle and the sure faith of victory" declared one reporter in its extravagant opening salute.[32] "To you, emulator of the greatest past masters who have installed the name of Italy in stars high in the heavens of art, and knew how to preserve for our beautiful peninsula the primary things – inalienable, intangible – of beauty and art; to you, today, we extend our auspicious and grateful greeting." *Isabeau*'s medieval setting here inspires a depiction of operatic composition as itself a battle of arms, with the "sweetest harmonies" imagined as being tough as steel. For the Italian émigré community, Mascagni's success in Argentina

[29] "Indecenze", *La patria degli italiani*, 28 May 1897.
[30] The Tommaso di Savoia arrived in Buenos Aires on 2 May 1911, having stopped in Rio de Janeiro en route. The reception of the composer upon arrival was similarly lavish to Puccini's earlier welcome, with a band playing sections from *Iris* and a large crowd to greet him.
[31] See "Teatri e Concerti: Iris", *La patria degli italiani,* 23 June 1899. The review emphasises the opulence and musical peculiarity of Mascagni's score, as marking a move away from realist theatre towards a more symbolist aesthetic.
[32] "A Voi, Gloria nostra; a Voi, italo fabbro di armonie soavvissime; a Voi, Pietro Mascagni, in questa vigilia d'arme, mentre nell'anima vostra freme l'ardore e l'ansia della battaglia e la fede sicura nella vittoria […] a Voi, o emulo dei grandissimi maestri passata che seppero estallere il nome d'Italia alto nei cieli dell'arte e seppero alla nostra penisola bella conservare il primate – inalienabile, intangibile – della bellezza e dell'arte; a Voi, oggi, il nostro salute augurale e riconoscente." "Isabeau: Il Grande Avvenimento Artistico", *La patria degli italiani*, 1 June 1911.

appeared to be crucial to their own cultural standing: "From then on, with febrile anxiety you searched in your soul and in your art the way that was to take you to your masterpiece […] Italy and the world were waiting for the new revelation: they were waiting for you to know what other secret you have torn from the muse. And Italy and the world are waiting."[33] While *Rantzau, L'amico Fritz, Iris,* and *Le maschere* were "grandissime tutte", the pressure to produce a masterpiece was unprecedented; and as the article goes on to discuss the rehearsals and offer a synopsis, unexpected parallels even lurk between Mascagni's impatient audience and Isabeau's own people and city, desperate for the princess to perpetuate her kingdom.[34] If Mascagni's stated aim was to recover a spirit of the Italian past – a Gothic medievalism born in the 1830s – the opera's own plot instead suggests a striking allegory for concerns about Italian cultural continuity.

In practice, however, questions about Mascagni's own break with the past were omnipresent. As *La Nación* quipped, a public success on the opening night was a foregone conclusion for a deeply "popular" musician, with an audience ready to proclaim anything they heard as an extraordinary masterpiece.[35] In the cold light of day (and certainly by the second performance), the rift between expectations and reality was clearer: the increasingly abstract approach pursued by Mascagni and Illica did not deliver the expected emotional climax.[36] Sentiment had long been considered Mascagni's gift, but the characters of *Isabeau* were largely flat: symbolic representations of repressed passion and pantheist idealism rather than human complexity; and harmonic experimentation tended towards unpleasantness. If contemporary opera composers framed themselves as radical, *La Nación* argued, they in fact indulged the public's love of vulgarity and noise, rather than offering them an artistic escape from the mundane.[37] Still, progress could not be denied, the critic asserted; and if *Isabeau* was only a partial triumph, it was a necessary stepping stone to a new Italian opera that broke

[33] "D'allora, con ansia febrile Voi cercaste nell'anima e nell'arte vostra la via che doveva portavi al capolavoro […] L'Italia e il mondo attendevano la nuova rivelazione: aspettavano da Voi di sapere quale altro segreto avevate strappato alle Muse. E L'Italia e il mondo aspettano." Ibid.
[34] "Dalla piazza sguisciano, diffondendosi capricciosamente, strade che per alter vie, per viuzze, per viottoli corrono tutta la Cittá […] un tumulto di voci e di suoni". Ibid.
[35] "Teatros y Conciertos: Estreno de 'Isabeau'", *La Nación,* 3 June 1911.
[36] In his own correspondence with Anna Lolli, Mascagni remarked on the "fenomenale" response of the public and the highly enthusiastic tone of most reports but added that Argentine reviewers were used to being able to rely upon the opinions of earlier European reviewers and were "imbrogliati" [in a muddle] by the pressure of making the first judgement. See *Pietro Mascagni, Epistolario, Vol 1,* ed. Mario Morini, Roberto Iovino & Alberto Paloscia (Lucca; Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1996), 340. Mascagni's letters from his trip focus on the heavy workload, his high renumeration and the glowing public reception of his operas: "*Isabeau* trionfa sempre più: stasera quarta rappresentazione", 341.
[37] "Teatro y Conciertos: Isabeau", *La Nación,* 6 June 1911.

away from the past – even as Mascagni had decisively stepped away from operas set in the present day.

TEATROS

Estreno de "Isabeau". — El público aplaudiendo al maestro Mascagni al terminar la representación

Seamos por un momento la historia (siquiera la historia elemental y sumaria de los hechos y las fechas), ya que el acontecimiento artístico-teatral de la semana se presenta á la crónica con ribetes de caso histórico.

En la noche del 2 de junio subió á la escena del Coliseo, de Buenos Aires, la ópera en tres actos del maestro Pietro Mascagni, "Isabeau", con tanta expectativa aguardada por el mundo musical. Dirigió la orquesta el glorioso autor, é interpretaron los dos principales papeles la soprano María Farneti (Isabeau) y el tenor Saludas (Folco).

Ensordecedores aplausos, verdaderas ovaciones pocas veces tan unánimes, testimoniaron al autor de "Cavalleria Rusticana" y de "Iris" el homenaje de un público enorme que miraba en la presencia del celebrado músico y en la representación de su obra, aun no revelada á ningún auditorio, un suceso de excepcional importancia en los anales artísticos de la capital sudamericana. La obra quizás no convenció á todos con esa universal fuerza impositiva de la creación estética lograda en toda su plenitud de hallazgo genial. La sensación de belleza, de gran elocuencia dramático-musical, no se afirmó en el público; la impresión causada por "Isabeau" se acusó con va-

El autor de "Isabeau", su esposa é intérpretes de la ópera en el escenario del Coliseo después del estreno

Fig. 5.1. *Caras y caretas*, July 1911. Biblioteca Nacional de España.

Other reviewers painted Mascagni's distance from *Cavalleria* more positively. For *La Razón* – a newly-founded ultra-conservative paper that largely championed insular nationalist models – *Isabeau*'s greatest achievement was precisely its sensitivity to non-Italian musical

styles, with melodic fragmentation still creating an impressive effect.[38] Both Strauss and contemporary Russian opera appeared to have influenced the opera (the latter most clearly in the extensive crowd scenes), and Mascagni demonstrated to his contemporaries the opportunities outside Italian art. *Isabeau* was to Mascagni what *Salome* was to Strauss, argued another reporter – not just an opera centred on female nudity, but an experiment in colouristic effects and harmonic extremes.[39] After the fever of opening night, even *La patria degli italiani* acknowledged that the opera had problems, and that the hoped-for masterpiece had not quite arrived.[40] Like Spanish-language reviewers, the paper identified Mascagni as opening the door for future Italian composers via his awareness of figures such as Franck and D'Indy as well as Wagner. But Italian blood nonetheless still flowed in his veins, this reviewer suggested, with references even to Paisiello and Cimarosa: a shifting array of influences that suggest worries at an absence of recognisable *italianità* in Mascagni's new work.

Overall, *Isabeau* clearly failed to embody the masterpiece or obvious repertory staple that reviewers or audiences had anticipated. Seen less negatively, though, *Isabeau* was not so much a failure as a *promesse de bonheur*: one that could be applauded not just for its familiar *italianità* (where it could be found) but also for its awareness of international trends, and the transition it promised to an as-yet undefined operatic future. The new "*Cavalleria*" could not just be another *Cavalleria*; time had moved on. The array of musical styles referenced in reviews ultimately suggests the opera's role as a vehicle for projecting critics' own musical interests, and their ambitions for a new operatic masterpiece. In that sense, I would argue, it seems helpful to measure *Isabeau*'s reception against that of burgeoning efforts to create explicitly nationalist Argentine operas, ones invariably using Italian libretti. Arturo Berutti had already presented several new operas in Buenos Aires on Latin American themes, notably *Pampa* (1897) and *Yupanki* (1899), the latter premiered with Enrico Caruso in the lead. As Malena Kuss has argued, such operas typically cleaved to Italian operatic models despite their Argentine material, with plots usually inspired by the distant past or the earliest days of the Argentine republic. Paradoxically, the elements marked as "native" were therefore the most unfamiliar; Italian musical conventions registered as normal. These projects reflected the development of explicit Argentine cultural nationalism in the period around 1900, most notably in the writings of Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Galvéz on the

[38] "Isabeau: El acontecimiento de anoche", *La Razón*, 3 June 1911.
[39] "Arte y Teatro: El Estreno de "Isabeau"", *La Prensa*, 3 June 1911.
[40] "Arte e Artisti: Isabeau", *La patria degli italiani*, 3 June 1911.

Argentine national character.[41] This character was increasingly understood to be located in a combination of the Argentine landscape, Spanish heritage and an (imagined) Indian past, with the revolutions of 1810 and 1816 mythologised as moments of national self-knowledge; as Lilia Ana Bertoni suggests, this essentialist nationalism had assumed a dominant position in government and elite rhetoric by the 1910 centenary celebrations.[42] These developments clearly reflected anxieties about a cosmopolitan and fractured society, shaped by wider European movements towards belligerent nationalism; and they involved the transformation of elements previously rejected by government elites – the barren interior, gauchos, the indigenous population – as emblems of *argentinidad*: an idealisation of the past akin to *Isabeau*'s Romanticism, albeit with obvious geographical differences. Already by the 1890s Argentine musical nationalism had been emerging in the field of instrumental music, with composers drawing upon folk music and the topoi of the guitar to shape an invented musical tradition.[43] Yet operatic exoticism developed only later: Pascual de Rogatis's *Huemac* (1916) would be the first opera presented at the Colón that sought to evoke an Aztec past through the use of pentatonic melodies.[44] By the time of *Isabeau*'s premiere, nativist opera remained a

[41] Rojas published articles regularly in *La Nación*, as well as several book-length studies: see his *Cosmópolis* (1908) and *La Argentinidad* (1916). For a recent overview, see María Beatriz Schiffino, "Ricardo Rojas y la invencíon de la Argentina mestiza", *Revista Pilquen: Sección Ciencias Sociales* 14 (2011), 1-14.
[42] Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, Cosmopolitas y Nacionalistas: La Construcción de la Nacionalidad Argentina a Fines del Siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de cultura económica de Argentina, S.A, 2001), especially 307-16.
[43] Williams's piano piece "El rancho abandonado" (1890) is usually seen as the first example of Argentine musical nationalism. For a recent summary of these developments, see Melanie Plesch, "The Topos of the Guitar in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Argentina", *The Musical Quarterly* 92/3-4 (2009), 242–78. As Plesch argues, the development of Argentine musical nationalism during this period is a text-book example of select elements from a "low culture" – typically oral and imagined as representative of an idealised *Volk* – being radically transformed into a high, literary culture. These elements nonetheless remained embedded within an established European elite style: "the gaucho might be the soul of the nation, but his role is still subaltern", as Plesch concludes. Plesch's argument draws upon Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983), as well as Josefina Ludmer, *El género gauchesco: un tratado sobre la patria* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1988). The history of Argentine cultural nationalism has been much studied; for a recent overview that stresses links with German Romanticism, see Jean H. Delaney, "Imagining *El Ser Argentino*: Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Argentina", *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34/3 (2002), 625-58. Delaney notes the reception of German intellectual thought as early as the 1830s (especially via French writers such as Jules Michelet) and the influence of Spanish intellectuals in the 1890s, while acknowledging that cultural nationalists (and their emphasis on soil and ethnicity) were by no means the only political voice in Argentina at this time.
[44] See Malena Kuss, "Huemac, by Pascual De Rogatis: Native Identity in the Argentine Lyric Theatre", *Anuario Interamericano De Investigación Musical* 10 (1974), 68-87; and more recently Vera Wolkowicz, "Inventing Inca Music: Indigenist Discourses in Nationalist and Americanist Art Music in Peru, Ecuador and Argentina (1910-1930)" (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2018). As Kuss notes, these pentatonic themes – based not on historical investigation but rather the composer's fantasy – are typically used as leitmotifs and subject to thematic transformation; the love duet also recalls that of several early-twentieth-century Italian operas. Cetrangolo also draws attention to the similarity of *Huemac*'s plot to that of *Aida*; Rogatis was himself Italian-born and emigrated to Argentina as a child, receiving all his musical education in Buenos Aires.

literary rather than musical endeavour, with composers on the operatic stage unsure about (or uninterested in) developing a form of operatic Americana.

Isabeau's gesture towards the distant past was thus a familiar move for Argentine audiences; and it is striking that even the conservative *La Razón* should have welcomed Mascagni's opera so warmly. Connections between *Isabeau* and contemporary nativist operas gain a more concrete point of comparison, however, when Mascagni's opera is placed alongside Héctor Panizza's *Aurora* (1908), the work premiered during the inaugural season of the new Colón. As outlined in Chapter Four, *Aurora* would later become the source for one of Argentina's national anthems and continued to be performed in Italian until 1945. Crucially, its libretto was also written by Luigi Illica, aided by Argentine writer Héctor Quesada; and both *Aurora* and *Isabeau* had soprano Maria Farneti in the title roles.[45] If *Aurora,* like Panizza himself, was an Italian-Argentine hybrid from the start, *Isabeau* could perhaps be heard as a musical sibling: not necessarily an Italian threat, but rather an opera seeking to move away from older Italian conventions towards an undefined musical destination; and sharing with *Aurora* both a creative team, and a plot concerned with nationalist politics and personal desire. Such sentiments were certainly not explicitly expressed in 1911 reviews; yet early responses to *Aurora* do demonstrate a keen awareness of its debt to Italian musical history, suggesting significant links between the two works. Reviewing its opening night, *La Nación* noted the obvious plot similarities with Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* (1896) and compared the excitement of the premiere to that surrounding Verdi's *Otello*, before concluding "We are sorry to say it, but 'Aurora' is not an Argentinian opera […] it's an Italian opera": the pampas sounded too much like Verdi.[46]

Against that background, Mascagni's own stylistic conundrum takes on further significance, as *Isabeau* offered an unusually public (and local) example of new approaches to Italian operatic composition. In 1913, two virtually concurrent productions of the opera were presented at the Teatro Coliseo and the Colón, the latter opening on the eve of the 25 de Mayo anniversary and concluding a day of massive patriotic celebrations in the city.[47] Three

[45] *Aurora*'s reception in 1908 is discussed in Kuss, "Nativistic Strains", and Cetrangolo, *Ópera, barcos y banderas: El melodrama y la migración en Argentina (1880-1920)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015), 173-87; both authors underline the opera's lack of musical exoticism and the disappointed reactions of some local critics to this.

[46] "Sentimos decirlo, pero "Aurora" no es una ópera argentina […] es una ópera italiana"; "Teatros y Conciertos: El Estreno de "Aurora"", *La Nación*, 6 September 1908, 7.

[47] The Coliseo production opened on 11 May 1913 and again featured Farneti, now with G. Marinuzzi conducting; the Colón production was part of the winter season run by the Gran Compañia Lirica Italiana, with Cecilia Gagliardi singing Isabeau and Antonio Gaurnieri conducting.

years earlier, strikes by Italian workers around the centenary celebrations had raised tensions between Argentine elites and the diasporic community; and on 26 June 1910 a bomb had been detonated at the Colón by anarchists during a performance of Massenet's *Manon* (the soprano onstage was Rosina Storchio). Mascagni's operas, however, remained in the repertory of both major theatres. By 1913 *La Nación* had grown impatient with *Isabeau*, the opera's historic role in Argentine musical history only partly compensating for the aggressive orchestration and lack of expressive vocality identified by several critics.[48] And yet the Colón management still decided to include the opera in its own season and scheduled it on the most celebratory occasion of the Argentine year. In canonical terms, therefore, *Isabeau* was perhaps less an immortal work than an emblem of a priceless historical moment. More than just a famous occasion, the opera's mix of styles and Italo-Argentine profile positioned *Isabeau* as a constellation of different social agendas – one that merited sustained remembrance and revisiting. It was also one that could filter out into surrounding territories: *Isabeau* was soon performed in Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela and Mexico, in productions that did not always have a direct connection with Mascagni or the Teatro Coliseo.

As with the continued presence of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*, an increasingly belligerent nationalism did not therefore preclude Italian works occupying a prominent operatic position; and Mascagni's later works could even operate in productive dialogue with nativist composition. "Every artist, when they arrive at a given moment of evolution in their art, should not disdain whatever form of progress, and everything than can enrich his particular vocabulary" *La Razón* had earlier remarked; and *Isabeau*'s successful performance history throughout Buenos Aires and Latin America in later years suggests that it was useful not least for its explicit break with Mascagni's own past, and its suggestions of new Italian operatic approaches.[49] A truly "Argentine" opera required a delicate balance between folk elements and familiar Italian practices; Mascagni might have been pointing a way forward, but his chromatic harmonies and tiring vocal writing were not something to emulate. *Isabeau* was thus both a symbol of Argentina's operatic prestige, and a screen against which to define a sense of *argentinidad*.[50] If Italian and Argentine musical identities were mutually defining,

[48] "Teatros y conciertos", *La Nación*, 25 May 1913, 18. *La Prensa* were equally sceptical about the work's qualities, complaining about the lack of "elasticity" in the score: "Arte y teatro", *La Prensa*, 25 May 1913, 14.
[49] "[T]odo artista presente en un momento dado de la evolucíon de su arte, no debe desdeñar cuanto signifique un progreso, todo cuanto enriquezca el vocabulario especial." "Isabeau: El acontecimiento de anoche", *La Razón*, 3 June 1911.
[50] As suggested in Chapter Two, the continued success of Italian opera during this period clearly complicates a reading of musical politics simply in terms of nationalism; and a cosmopolitan or post-national approach is perhaps reflected even more strongly with *Isabeau*, given its contemporaneity.

in other words, *Isabeau* – like *Aurora* – could potentially even serve as a border case.[51] Neither straightforwardly Italian, nor unambiguously Argentinian, both operas instead occupied a liminal position in constructions of the Argentine canon around 1911, as "Argentine" as Italian operas could conceivably be: *Aurora* through its libretto and composer, *Isabeau* through its global fame and attendant public excitement. Their continued place in the Argentine repertory signified not only local pride or musical popularity, then, but even a form of border patrolling: works that marked the distinction between Italian and Argentine operatic identities, while also potentially dissolving it.[52]

Heard in this context, *Isabeau* could be viewed as the latest representative of the Italian operatic tradition, that could inspire feverish hopes for émigrés. Heard differently, though, the opera could alternatively be understood as developing its own position within a complex musical environment: negotiating a path between the Italian past and encroaching modernism; a journey that contemporary Argentine composers would soon also undertake. While *Cavalleria* was now a thoroughly canonised (and largely uncontroversial) emblem of *italianità*, *Isabeau* suggested a more mixed Italo-Argentine future; one in which certain Italian operas might be embraced as productive counterparts to a nativist canon. If the opera's local success (and repertory status) was to some extent pre-ordained, this was at least in part because of both local pride and diasporic hopes, and because Argentine musical culture was itself seeking to develop a different path away from the Italian operatic past.

Montemezzi Beyond Italy

Isabeau's arrival in Argentina had long been anticipated. A remarkably different atmosphere surrounded *L'amore dei tre re* when it made its triumphant New York debut in early January 1914. "Quite unheralded by proclamations of European fame, a new opera by an unknown Italian composer was presented last evening for the first time in the United States at the Metropolitan Opera House, producing a deep impression on lovers of dramatic music, wholly unprepared for such a sensation" declared *The New York Times* the following morning. "The first hearing of this work prompts the opinion that it is one of the strongest and most original

[51] For a related argument dealing with French-Spanish relations, see Samuel Llano, *Whose Spain? Negotiating Spanish Music in Paris, 1908-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 161-91.
[52] For a recent discussion of borders within musicological canons, see the colloquy convened by Tamara Levitz, "Musicology Beyond Borders?", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65/3 (2012), 821-61.

operatic productions that have come out of Italy since Verdi laid down his pen."[53] Other publications were united in their admiration for Montemezzi's opera: the premiere had been a "sensational success", according to one report, while W.J. Henderson confirmed the opera's tremendous public response, despite its more modest Italian reception and the lack of pre-publicity; the opera received sixteen curtain calls on opening night.[54] Overall, Montemezzi's success could even appear to reshape impressions of Italian operatic decline: "something new is always coming out of Italy", observed one source, and Montemezzi's New York triumph promised a succession of future masterpieces.[55]

Montemezzi's situation had appeared significantly less positive in preceding years. As Piergiorgio Rossetti and David Chandler have both outlined, the success of Montemezzi's *Giovanni Gallurese* (1905) at its Turin premiere had led to the composer being brought into the Ricordi stable and rewarded with a monthly stipend.[56] An early collaboration with Luigi Illica – *Helléra* (1909) – was critically unsuccessful, however, and by 1911 the composer's relationship with his publisher was growing fractious and the stipend withdrawn. The public failure of Sam Benelli's source play in 1910 made *L'amore* seem unpromising, and in the end the opera was scheduled for only four performances at the end of La Scala's 1913-14 season. As Chandler notes, Montemezzi was by then growing pessimistic: with *L'amore* (in the composer's own words) he was "playing [his] final card".[57] Critical reaction to the new opera in Milan was generally positive, however, if some distance from the effusive reactions later provoked across the Atlantic. "If the maestro, therefore, has not yet confirmed a personality, he has revealed the happy temperament of a musician, so that his *Amore dei Tre Re* leaves much to hope from with regarding the future", summarised *L'arte melodrammatica*.[58]

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[53] "Montemezzi Opera Warmly Received", *The New York Times*, 3 January 1914, 11. A selection of reviews from American performances of *L'amore dei tre re* are presented in *Americans on Italo Montemezzi*, ed. David Chandler (Norwich: Durrant publishing, 2014), 47-118.

[54] See *Current Opinion*, February 1914; and W.J. Henderson, "Montemezzi's Opera Success" (publication unknown, but probably *The Sun*; NYPL Montemezzi clippings files). *The Evening World* similarly remarked that "No new opera in recent years has contained so much of effective appeal to ear and eye and mind". Sylvester Rawling, "Montemezzi's Opera Grips a Second Audience", *The Evening World*, 13 January 1914, 15.

[55] *New York Telegraph*, 6 January 1914.

[56] *Omaggio a Italo Montemezzi*, ed. Piergiorgio Rossetti, (Vigasio 2002); and David Chandler, "Italo Montemezzi and the Conquest of America", *Music-web International*, http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2013/Mar13/Montemezzi_article.htm, accessed 13 February 2019. Chandler is currently completing a biography of Montemezzi from which this short article is derived.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "Se il maestro, dunque, non ha saputo ancora affermare una personalità, ha rivelato però un felice temperamento di musicista, pero modo che questo suo Amore dei Tre Re lascia assai bene a sperare, a di lui riguardo, per l'avvenire"; "Teatri di Milano, La Scala: L'Amore dei Tre Re", *L'arte melodrammatica*, 16 April-1 May 1913, 1. The article observes that the two previous operas had been less successful overall, and against this context *L'amore* was "un successo legittimo". A similar assessment was made in "Corriere Teatrale",

The decision to present *L'amore* as part of the Met's 1913-14 season was in hindsight predictable. As Davide Ceriani has shown, the appointment of Gatti-Casazza as Met director in 1908 had prompted concerns from a number of prominent critics about an "italianisation" of the theatre.[59] Gatti-Casazza sought publicly to defuse such anxieties, but soft words were accompanied by covert efforts to promote new Italian works. Already in 1910, Franchetti's *Germania* (1902) had received middling reviews from many critics, provoked in part by worries about Ricordi's influence over New York cultural life. The reception of Wolf-Ferrari's works in the following seasons was significantly warmer, a situation evaluated by Ceriani as owing at least in part to the composer's mixed Italian-German heritage and training. Both *Le donne curiose* (1903) and *Il segreto di Susanna* (1909) received strikingly positive press notices, that emphasised their freshness and musical invention in contrast to the maximalist novelties being presented at the theatre. Alongside these new Italian works, however, Gatti-Casazza and board director Otto Kahn had also launched efforts to encourage native operas at the Met, in response to longstanding questions about the failure to produce a native masterpiece.[60] The first was Frederick Shephard Converse's *The Pipe of Desire*, presented at the Met in March 1910, and in following years an annual competition produced a number of highly-publicised works that failed to enter the repertory. As Carolyn Guzski demonstrates, Gatti-Casazza became pessimistic about the project by the mid-1910s, with a piano play-through of Reginald De Koven's *The Canterbury Tales* (1917) provoking despair: "In my opinion, the music belongs to that style lacking entirely in originality, of which the public in every country has become very tired and for good reasons […] after their experiences with opera in English, the artists do not even want to hear anybody talk about it."[61]

Despite the nationalist drive underpinning the competition, none of the selected works featured an American setting or nativist material, and many reflected the German symphonic background of their composers; Franck and D'Indy were also regularly mentioned as

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Corriere della sera, 11 April 1911, 2: the opera was not a masterpiece, but it was full of energy, the article argues, and could make one feel proud again of a young Italian opera composer after years of customary dismissal.

[59] See Davide Ceriani, "Italianizing the Metropolitan Opera House: Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Era and the Politics of Opera in New York City, 1908-1935" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2011), especially 116-246.

[60] See Carolyn Guzski, "Otto Kahn and Americanism at the Metropolitan Opera", *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 65/3 (2004), 409-52. On earlier symphonic efforts at musical nationalism, see Douglas Shadle, *Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth-Century American Symphonic Enterprise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[61] Gatti-Casazza, Milan, to Kahn, July 16, 1915, Kahn Papers, Princeton University, box 166; cited in Guzski, "Otto Kahn and Americanism at the Metropolitan Opera", 427. *The Canterbury Tales* arrived on the Met stage in March 1917, to disappear shortly afterwards.

influences in reviews. Victor Herbert's *Madeleine* (1914) – premiered at the Met barely a month after *L'amore* – was thus dismissed as a pale imitation of Richard Strauss's new "conversational" style in *Der Rosenkavalier*.[62] Against this context, *L'amore*'s presence in the season was largely routine, and publicity surrounding the work was markedly discreet. The presence of Gustave Charpentier for the premiere of *Julien* (1913) was of more local interest in the season announcement, for example, as was tenor Edoardo Ferraro-Fontani's debut in *L'amore*'s cast.[63] As the opera premiered, the absence of publicity in fact appeared to be a blessing: lower expectations had made audiences more receptive to a new work.[64] The absence of a full-blown publicity campaign by Ricordi potentially also allowed the work to float more freely from Italian characterisations, re-orientating audiences' usual frame of reference. If the La Scala reception was enough to secure a New York outing, it overall did not raise hopes unrealistically high. Unsaddled by the nationalist hopes of American commissions, neither pushed by Ricordi, nor even familiar through Montemezzi himself, the opera's profile was momentarily less sharply defined.[65]

Initial responses in the New York press overall stressed *L'amore*'s resistance to easy classification. While references to Wagner, Strauss and Debussy were a recurring thread in early reviews – with nods to Maeterlinck suggesting the opera's murky atmosphere – the dominant theme was Montemezzi's challenge to familiar national classifications of Italian, German or French. Thus for *The New York Times* neither Puccini nor Ponchielli were to be found in the opera's score, nor the use of Wagnerian leitmotifs, nor indeed "more than a trace of what is generally accounted the influence of modern France".[66] Other reports noted that Montemezzi had to be considered *sui generis* in his musical style, and that any obviously Italian points of comparison were more likely to found with Verdi's *Otello* than the *giovane scuola*.[67] Even the handful of less enthusiastic reviews in later months interpreted the score in relation to Wagner, Strauss and Debussy rather than Italian predecessors.[68] In voicing their

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[62] Ibid., 425.
[63] See "Opera Novelties Early in Season", *The New York Times*, 16 October 1913, 11.
[64] W.J. Henderson, "Montemezzi's Opera Success" (NYPL Montemezzi clippings files); and "The lessons of "L'Amore dei tre re"" (NYPL Montemezzi clippings files). The latter article remarks: "Extra prices were not asked, nor was the performance dignified as "special". And lo! "L'Amore" proves itself the greatest Italian opera since Verdi!"
[65] The *Musical Courier* similarly observed that "[w]e know that this present opera has created no stir in the operatic world in Italy": "American premiere of 'L'Amore dei tre re'", *Musical Courier*, 7 January 1914, reprinted in *Americans on Italo Montemezzi*, 85-90.
[66] "Montemezzi Opera Warmly Received", *The New York Times*, 3 January 1914, 11.
[67] "Two Surprises of the Operatic Season in New York" (NYPL Montemezzi clippings files); Henry Krehbiel, October 1915 (NYPL Montemezzi clippings files).
[68] Lawrence Gilman, *The Opera*, May 1914.

reservations, reviewers in fact tended to focus on the absence of the most expected quality in an Italian opera: memorable melody. For *Town and Country*, the opera was a truer music drama even than Wagner's works, but lacked the kind of captivating vocal lines that would keep audiences returning to it in the future.[69]

The relative absence of comparisons to Italian musical history is especially surprising given the opera's theme of romantic conquest: a scenario played out on symbolically national lines.[70] The object of the three kings' desire is the Italian princess Fiora, who has been captured (alongside her kingdom) by the blind king Archibaldo. Fiora is still in love with Avito (an Italian prince), but she has been betrothed to Archibaldo's son, Manfredo. Discovering Fiora's adultery, Archibaldo has her killed and leaves poison on her lips to murder Avito. Alas, both Avito and Manfredo are killed by the potion, and Archibaldo himself dies at the opera's conclusion. Benelli's libretto offered an obvious allegory for Italy's history of occupation and resistance, a theme even more explicitly developed in Montemezzi's follow-up *Le nave* (1918). New York reviews certainly drew attention to the opera's Italian setting and referenced "the flashing torch of his Italian temperament" that had animated the source material, in the words of Max Smith.[71] The Italian-language press also produced a number of predictably flattering articles about the opera, whose boilerplate rhetoric could not conceal an occasional puzzlement at the music's stylistic mixture. For *Il giornale italiano*, for example, Montemezzi had succumbed to the "modern" obsession with Wagner; and while it noted the Italian operatic celebrities who had attended the dress rehearsal, concluded that the composer had not quite yet produced a masterpiece.[72] Yet overall, it is fair to say, *L'amore*'s reception was marked by an overwhelming sense of the opera's hybridity: "It is rare to come upon one whose artistic lineage is so difficult to trace […] the music gives the impression of freshness and modernity, in the composer's own way."[73] If debates had long raged about the precise form a "native" American music should take, Montemezzi could appear to offer a way forward, away from old national distinctions:

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[69] *Town and Country*, 10 January 1910 (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings files).
[70] The notable exception is W.J. Henderson, "Double triumph of an Opera and a Singer", *The Sun*, 11 January 1914, 4.
[71] Max Smith, *The Press* (NYPL, Montemezzi Clippings Files).
[72] "Nel mondo teatrale: al Metropolitan", *Il Giornale Italiano*, 3 January 1914. In its report the previous, "L'opera italiana di questa sera", the paper had recorded the presence of Victor Maurel, Enrico Caruso and Antonio Scotti at the dress rehearsal. In its substantially more positive report, *Il progresso italo-americano* noted the enthusiastic response of newspapers back in Italy to Montemezzi's American triumph and the congratulatory telegrams he had received after the event: "La stampa italiana ed il successo dell' "Amore dei tre re"", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 4 January 1914, 1.
[73] "Montemezzi Opera Warmly Received", *The New York Times*, 3 January 1914, 11.

towards a cosmopolitan, even markedly American modernity – albeit one obviously still national.

What *did* strike critics was the score's pulsating energy. The smattering of musicological studies dedicated to *L'amore dei tre re* have typically emphasised its debt to *stile Liberty* aesthetics, a similarity evident in surviving images of Mario Sala's sets and Giuseppe Mancini's costumes; these were both borrowed in New York from the La Scala production, and praised as "magnificently opulent" (see Figs. 5.2 and 5.3).[74] Musical comparisons have been drawn between *L'amore* and Riccardo Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* (1914), a richly-scored symbolist work which appeared at the Met to lukewarm reviews in 1916. Alongside *L'amore*'s visual opulence, later historians have tended to focus upon the opera's status as *Literaturoper*, characterised by an absence of musical set-pieces in favour of a constantly unfolding dramatic scenario. In musical terms, this is reflected in the subtle use of developing variation technique (with leitmotifs also subject to ongoing transformation) and a rich orchestral tapestry foregrounded over discrete sections of solo vocal display. Cross-rhythms are strongly present throughout the score, evoking the intrigue of Archibaldo's court and the heightened emotions of the drama. Above all, ostinato plays a fundamental role in the opera's stylistic mix: a feature that foreshadows Puccini's later experiments with the technique in *Gianni Schicchi* (1918).[75] As Alessandra Campana and Christopher Morris observe, ostinato was the modernist signifier par excellence, an auditory symbol of the machine age that contrasted with familiar notions of Italian lyricism; it was thus a technique far removed from Montemezzi's mystical Italian kingdom. These "persistently reiterated rhythmical and melodic figures" were for Henry Krehbiel evidence of Montemezzi's familiarity with Mussorgsky and Russian folk music; but above all they had a dramatic function, "and the composer's splendid command of the stage and of musical expression […] at times reaches the marvellous".[76] Krehbiel's sentiments were widely

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[74] On the *stile Liberty*, see Graham Strahle, "A Searching Spirit: Art nouveau Trends in Early Twentieth-Century Italian Music", Miscellanea musicologica: Adelaide Studies in Musicology, "Conspectus Carminis: Essays for David Galliver", 15 (1988), 153-71; for praise, see Herbert F. Peyser, "Success unequivocal crowns 'L'Amore dei tre re' in its first American performance", *Musical America*, 10 January 1914, reprinted in *Americans on Italo Montemezzi*, 47-62. Images of Mancini's costumes are available via Ricordi's digital archive: https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/works/display/4?mode=iconografia&page=1. Accessed 22 November 2018.

[75] On Puccini's use of ostinato, see Alessandra Campana and Christopher Morris, "Puccini's Things: Materials and Media in *Il Trittico*", in *Giacomo Puccini and his World*, ed. Emanuele Senici & Arman Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 133-57, especially 145-6. Some New York reviews of *L'amore* even listed notable musical figures to help guide the audience through the work.

[76] Henry Edward Krehbiel, *More Chapters of Opera; Being Historical and Critical Observations and Records concerning the Lyric Drama in New York from 1908 to 1918* (New York: H Holt and Company, 1919), 316.

echoed, with reports emphasising the "electrifying effect" of Montemezzi's score and its disinterest in "realist" auditory effects.[77] "There is no pause in the wave of sound until the curtain drops before you can think that the opera is well begun" remarked one commentator, while Benelli's libretto was compared to D'Annunzio in the "strange and potent fascination of [its] spell".[78] By the third performance, Krehbiel was certain that "a new comet has swung into view upon the operatic firmament, and that Italy has at last found a genius of whom it may well be proud […] Montemezzi is a worshipper of beauty, and never once does he violate its sacred canons".[79] If Montemezzi had achieved a unique form of musical modernity, it was precisely by ignoring the practices of a previous Italian generation and instead developing a hyper-expressive, indeed blatantly sensational musical style.

Fig. 5.2. Adamo Didur (Archibaldo) and Lucrezia Bori (Fiora), *L'amore dei tre re* (1914). Metropolitan Opera Archives

Krehbiel's history draws heavily on his regular reviews for the *New York Tribune* during this period. *Boris Gudunov* had received its US premiere at the Met on 19 March 1913, to ecstatic reviews, an event that appears to have coloured Krehbiel's reaction.

[77] For *Musical America*, for example, Montemezzi had shown that music could be an escape from reality rather than a reproduction (NYPL Montemezzi clippings).

[78] *Town and Country*, 10 January 1910; "'Love of Three Kings' Had Successful Debut (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings files).

[79] Cited in the *Chicago Evening Post*, 1 October 1915 (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings): the article is a report on the opera in advance of its Chicago debut.

Fig. 5.3. Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana (Avito), Lucrezia Bori (Fiora), *L'amore dei tre re* (1914). Metropolitan Opera Archives

Critics' emphasis on the opera's sensuous appeal, its use of repetition and its accelerated development to some degree echo earlier responses to verismo opera: above all a focus on noisiness.[80] The values associated with this sensation could nonetheless be remarkably varied. At one level, Montemezzi's opera seemed a distinct break from operatic realism in favour of an archaic symbolism, one characterised by the "poetic" and the "beautiful". The opulence of the sets and performance of the singers – especially Fontano and Lucrezia Bori as the lovers, alongside Arturo Toscanini in the pit – clearly foregrounded classical beauty, positioning the work as an escape from material reality. The absence of operatic set-pieces was compensated for by sustained passages of extreme vocal writing, in ways that echoed earlier music-dramas. At the same time, however, critical comments on the opera's energy and violence – a "gruesome drama", in the words of the *Musical Courier* – foreshadow reactions associated more obviously with the emergence of post-war modernism, as well as recent works by Strauss. These tensions thus open up a porous space between the antique and the progressive, the ideal and the mechanical. As Carol Oja remarks in her study of New York's musical scene in the 1920s

"[t]he decade between 1910 and 1920 was the mysterious Paleolithic period of American modernist music. Occasional glints of activity were overshadowed by a near single-minded focus on historic European repertories. Concert-goers were far more likely to hear Schubert than Stravinsky, and they had little chance of encountering music by a forward-looking composer born in America."[81]

Oja's orchestral focus may underplay the range of new operatic works showcased during this period, but there is little doubt that operatic repertory remained primarily focused on established European works. The situation was admittedly more complex around the visual arts: the celebrated International Exhibition of Modern Art at the Armory on Lexington Avenue in early 1913 had provided a major vehicle for introducing the latest trends in painting and sculpture to New York audiences, and marked the first encounter for many visitors to futurism and cubism.[82] American artists tended to attract less public interest than works by Duchamp or Picasso, but the exhibition's high profile did underscore significant

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[80] See Arman Schwartz, "Rough Music: Tosca and Verismo Reconsidered", *19th-Century Music* 31/3 (2008), 228-44.
[81] Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.
[82] Exhibitors were evenly split between European and American artists, with works by Picasso, Matisse, Duchamp and Brâncuși attracting major attention alongside older works by Monet and Van Gogh. On the exhibition and its importance in American history, see *1915, the Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art, and the New Theatre in America*, ed. Adele Heller & Lois Rudnick (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991). The New York Historical Society maintains a study of the exhibition, with photographs, on its website: http://armory.nyhistory.org/category/artworks/. Accessed 23 November 2018.

curiosity in encountering radical artistic works. As Oja suggests, Leo Ornstein's concerts in 1915 likewise aimed to provoke public interest in emerging modernist music, less as a nativist move than by a confidence in New Yorkers' interest in new musical styles. Operatic repertoire, however, was yet to enter into the fray; indeed, complaints regarding the new commissions at the Met tended to focus largely on their "academic" conservatism and lack of creative firepower.

None of this is to suggest that *L'amore* should be simply reimagined as an avant-garde work, nor to make "objective" claims about its aesthetic standing. For one, points of comparison with earlier Italian operas spring easily to mind: the "three men fight for one soprano" plot scenario seems at least partly inspired by Verdi's *Ernani* (1844), while musically the work's energy clearly owes much to the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre* (1870). Critical voices in New York were also ready to note the opera's crowd-pleasing appeal: the *New York Telegraph* interpreted the opera's success directly in relation to Montemezzi's desire to write for audiences rather than an "academic" listener.[83] Yet it is clear that *L'amore*'s local success can also not be accounted for only in terms of the score; nor can one conclude that the opera was interpreted as unthreateningly old-fashioned. The opera flopped in London and Paris, and its Italian repertory status never matched that in the USA. References in New York reviews to Russian opera suggest that *L'amore*'s success was due partly to its similarity to then-novel repertory: *Boris Godunov* (1874) presented in set designs borrowed from Paris, had been the great hit of the previous season. Yet a large part of *L'amore*'s unexpected (and sustained) success was surely due more to the general sense of its nascent modernism: its capacity both to register the sensory impressions of contemporary life, and to provide an escape from them – one presented in the form of archaic medievalism.

Accounts of the opera's impact are in fact remarkably varied in the resonances located in Montemezzi's score. In one of the many reports to emerge around the premiere, W.J. Henderson offered his own (characteristically ornately expressed) reasons for supporting the opera's triumph:

> The finer and more sensitive American minds have become impatient with the methods of Puccini. This may astonish many Americans, because too little is known here about intellectual Italy. Our country is a receptacle for all this is most tawdry, most sordid, most circumscribed in Italian life. The comparatively few cultured and refined Italians who come

[83] As the article observed, "There is dramatic action to strike and to invade the eye. There is movement, suspense and catastrophe." *New York Telegraph*, 6 January 1914.

> to this country are […] completely hidden by the sweating mob […] Montemezzi's music is just as intensely Italian as the book, and like it, it has harked back to the finer models of the Italian lyric stage. The forceful expression of emotion is present in plenty, but this expression is invariably artistic, poetic, noble. There is no page of vulgar fawning at the feet of the ignorant. Montemezzi makes no effort at tickling the ribs of the mob […] If others do not enjoy what he has to say he will be content to dwell in a circle as exclusive as that of the medieval court of Mantua, which saw the birth of Italian opera.[84]

Montemezzi is here imagined as a representative of the archetypal musical elite: one uninterested in pleasing the interests of the masses – unlike the unfortunately commercial Puccini, and even more so Leoncavallo and Mascagni.[85] His music is considered Italian in so far as this reflects a world of aristocratic privilege and refined detachment from the "mob". Henderson's unashamedly snobbish attitude was unlikely to be shared by all members of the Met audience, but other reports certainly echo these sentiments: *Musical America* asserted that patrons declaring the inevitable decline of the "ideal" in opera should be brought to hear Montemezzi's revival of "the poetic, the distinguished and the beautiful".[86] The opera could at one level therefore offer a quintessentially modernist detachment from the "popular": an operatic work that operated in the realm of abstract symbols and radical juxtaposition, rejecting verismo trappings in favour of socially-cleansed aesthetics that reflected an imagined Italian past.[87]

The "philosophical" profile of the opera could also have specifically local associations. As Oja underlines, the aesthetic theories of Henri Bergson had become much-discussed in New York following a series of lectures at Columbia University in 1913, particularly his emphasis on the "vital impulse" of creative activity and the importance of process over scientific dogmatism.[88] Notoriously, press coverage surrounding Bergson's

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[84] W.J. Henderson, "Double triumph of an Opera and a Singer", *The Sun*, 11 January 1914, 4.
[85] Henderson continues by asserting that refined Italian citizens have turned their noses at *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* as unpleasantly lowbrow, unlike in New York: "In Italy, for instance, "Pagliacci" has no such standing as it has here […] there is a certain coarseness of fibre which relegates it to the popular theatres."
[86] *Musical America* (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings files). The article concludes by quoting Maurice Renaud: "The function of opera to-day should be to fill the place of the poetic drama which has practically disappeared."
[87] Henderson's rhetoric is a textbook example of the language analysed by John Carey in *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992).
[88] Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 16. Bergson's works had first been published in English translation in 1911, which had already prompted overviews of the philosopher's standing. "These three works constitute his complete 'opera', which have already given him a wider reputation than any other name in contemporary thought. In his native country he has already become classic, and his lectures at the Sorbonne are the scene of fashionable gatherings which rival the attraction of the latest violinist or the most popular cantatrice […] there is no other name in the philosophical field in Europe which vies with his in originality and significance". "The Latest of Philosophers", *The New York Times*, 20 August 1911, 15.

lectures had led to the first recorded traffic jam on Broadway, with the local press touting links between the philosopher's ideas and American intellectual history.[89] Bergson's observations on the phenomenology of time – if not explicitly related to music – do have tantalising similarities with opera more generally, particularly his emphasis on "dynamic" evolution and the shifting nature of perception. Echoes of Bergson's vocabulary (and their antecedents in William James) seep into reviews of *L'amore*, in ways that also suggest the legacy of Schopenhauer's aesthetics: from Krehbiel's remarks that "his melodies, which flow onward, like a river, now tumultuously as they carry the lovers upon their current", to the "flame of rapture" identified Montemezzi's score; and that Benelli's murky text contains the "mystery of life […] and the ruthlessness".[90] Bergson's claim that "consciousness […] cannot go through the same state twice" was similarly echoed in claims that "the music is a constant interpreter of emotions, the exponent of moods, and has little concern with externals", and was produced by a composer "who sees varied emotional expressions in varying orchestral timbres".[91] In rejecting a Wagnerian leitmotif "system", Montemezzi could be imagined to resist both verismo and scientific positivism, in favour of an intuitive flow of musical energy. Considered from this perspective, *L'amore* emerges as the answer to the question posed by critic James Gibbons Huneker in 1904: "After Wagner – What?".[92]

Yet it is difficult to reduce the opera's success entirely to philosophical fashion. Interpreted differently, the emphasis on *L'amore*'s sensory appeal – the "electrifying effect" it had upon the audience – also suggests a less abstract enjoyment of the work, related more to Broadway traffic jams than philosophical abstractions. The rhetoric of sensation in New York reviews – coupled with the violence of opera's plot and its extreme vocalism – certainly position *L'amore dei tre re* closer to Strauss's earlier "shockers", even if some critics felt that Montemezzi had tackled similar material to *Salome* with far greater delicacy.[93] Perceptions of

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[89] Larry McGrath, "Bergson Comes to America", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74/4 (2013), 599-620. As McGrath notes, coverage of Bergson's visit featured in all major New York newspapers, with at least 2000 people requesting tickets for the 500 seat lectures.

[90] Cited in "'Score Would Have Delighted Verdi's Soul' Says One Critic", *New York Herald*, 3 January 1914; "Montemezzi Opera Warmly Received", 3 January 191 (NYPLm Montemezzi clippings files); "'Love of Three Kings' Had Successful Debut", (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings files).

[91] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchel (New York: Henry Holt, 1944; original French edition 1907), 6, cited in Ruth Lorand, "Bergson's Concept of Art", *British Journal of Aesthetics* 39/4 (1999), 403; and "Montemezzi Opera Warmly Received", *The New York Times*, 3 January 1914, 11.

[92] Cited in "New Operas – Good and Not So Good" (NYPL, Montemezzi clippings files). The author's own assessment of the opera was "intensely modern, sincere, with not one bar designed to ravish the coarse public ear".

[93] On Montemezzi's superiority to Strauss, see John van Broekhoven, "L'Amore dei tre re", *Musical Observer*, February 1914, reprinted in *Americans on Italo Montemezzi*, 101-8.

L'amore's frenetic energy, I would suggest, ultimately hint at its role as an auditory counterpart to emerging visual modernism, encouraging links more broadly between Montemezzi's modes of representation and wider sensory experiences. [94] *L'amore*'s "modernity and freshness" could point to a new chapter in musical history: an insistent musical soundscape emerged explicitly marked by energy and rapidity, and that felt distinctly related to the city and its own rhetoric of urbanisation.[95]

To be sure, the most celebrated emblems (and representations) of New York's urbanism were yet to come.[96] Only after the Great War would Times Square become filled with electric billboards and emerge as a theatrical hub; the *Manhatta* city symphony would not appear on screen until 1921. But by 1914 New York's extreme energy and unparalleled commercial culture were already famous, not least as the object of increasing domestic tourism as well as foreign fascination. Commercial floodlighting had been pioneered in the late 1890s, encouraging a concentration of lighting effects in particular areas of the city that became dubbed the "white light" districts – especially Broadway.[97] As Richard Pells observes, by the early twentieth century no city in the world would exploit lighting technologies like New York, "expand[ing] on and redefin[ing] the sights and sounds of modernity far beyond what people in London or Paris might have envisioned or tolerated".[98] Acoustic developments were similarly discussed. The city's noisiness had gradually shifted from an inevitable symbol of industrial progress in the 1870s to a source of civic concern, with the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise being established in December 1906. By 1914, several American cities had created "quiet" zones around areas such as schools to control the urban din.[99] As *Harper's Weekly* declared in 1902, New York's appearance "startles the eye and dazzles the brain" with each "new manifestation of the

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[94] On connections between *Salome* and visual art, see Davinia Caddy, "Picturing the Paris *Salome*, May 1907", *The Opera Quarterly* 32/2-3 (2016), 160-91.

[95] David Chandler gestures in this direction to his introduction to *Americans on Italo Montemezzi*, when he writes "perhaps it was the sheer intensity of the opera, with its near-continuous dramatic tension […] [t]he opera conveyed a business-like urgency, the sense of a goal ardently pursued and achieved, that resonated with American values": 14.

[96] On New York's 1920s, see *Ann Douglas, Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995).

[97] See William Leach, "Introductory Essay", in *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*, ed. William R. Taylor (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996; first edition 1991), 234-42. On "commercial aesthetics", see also Leach's *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

[98] Richard Pells, *Modernist America: Art, Music, Movies, and the Globalization of American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 7.

[99] See Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 115-68.

American conquering spirit"; the culture of skyscrapers was "as if some mighty force were astir beneath the ground".[100] References to Montemezzi's opera's ability to "strike and invade the eye" in that context suggests a crucial affinity between operatic and urban effects: *L'amore dei tre re* as the quintessential New York opera, powered by extreme sensation and penetrating the audiences' eyes and ears with unprecedented force.[101]

Rather than offering an Italian Wagnerism, I would argue, Montemezzi had created an opera that in a New York context felt distinctively of the early 1910s: one that gestured towards a "national" (and even local) modern opera in ways that contemporary American composers had not yet managed. The abstraction and frenetic pace of the opera could register with the latest aesthetic theories, pushing the work away from the urban context towards a philosophical opera of sensations. Yet heard differently, *L'amore* could also suggest a soundtrack to modern life: the heady pace of the opera echoing emerging rhetoric of New York's dizzying energy and urban change, and resisting categorisation into older European national categories. Free to enjoy it without Italian interference, or advance publicity, audiences and critics instead made it their own. By January 1924, the opera had been performed at the Met to crowded houses nearly every season, and Montemezzi paid a celebratory visit to the theatre to mark the fortieth performance. The board of directors offered him a silver wreath and a gold pen with which to compose a new opera.[102] That imagined opera for the Met, however, never arrived; *L'amore* would remain, at least temporarily, the archetypal (Italian)-North American opera.

Re-building Italy's Operatic Museum

The reception of both *Isabeau* and *L'amore dei tre re* outlines the overlapping approaches by which Italian operas could be incorporated into an American operatic canon at this time. For émigré audiences, the operas' American premieres offered ripe opportunity for celebrating Italian cultural achievements and their continuation in the New World, while raising questions about the precise musical paths being taken by contemporary composers (and their

[100] "New York, the Unrivalled Business Centre", *Harper's Weekly*, 15 November 1902, 1673; cited in Neil Harris, "Urban Tourism and the Commercial City", in *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*, 66-82; cited passage 74.
[101] See *New York Telegraph*, 6 January 1914.
[102] See Olin Downes, "Opera", *The New York Times*, 10 January 1924, 18: Paul Craven gave a speech in which he congratulated Montemezzi for "the high rank among the great masters of opera upon our roll of honour" that he had achieved at the theatre.

relationship to an imagined Italian tradition). At the same time, the arrival of the operas raised a variety of different issues for American critics and managements. *Isabeau*'s Argentine premiere was an occasion of national significance and paved the way for Mascagni's sustained relationship with the Mocchi syndicate and a later South American tour. If *Isabeau* was at one level clearly marketed as an "Italian" opera, its continued performance history also allowed it to act as a placeholder for a truly "Argentine" opera. *L'amore*, meanwhile, enjoyed ecstatic reviews in the New York press for many years, to a degree unenjoyed by the Met's own commissions or other contemporary Italian works. Resisting easy classification along national-stylistic lines, the opera instead opened up a contemporary operatic idiom, whose sensory excess was at once poetically elevated and emphatically urban.

However widely discussed these two works were in Buenos Aires and New York, the impact of their American performances was hardly contained to these two cities. Indeed, the movement of the two operas across the Atlantic reinforced broader uncertainties within Italy about the future direction of Italian opera, and its relationship to the past. In the context of the Jubilee celebrations, questions about Italy's musical progress were unsurprisingly heightened; tensions between continuity and historical change had been at the heart of the entire Risorgimento movement. The nation's operatic past was thus called upon as a symbol of its political strength, and re-fashioned to suit contemporary political agendas: the decision two years later to celebrate the centenary of Verdi's birth with a production of *Nabucco* (1842) at La Scala is the clearest example.[103] Yet the direction of contemporary Italian music was profoundly unclear – and it is here, I would argue, that American perceptions come significantly into play. If Verdi's standing was stable (despite a malleable image) living composers had to establish themselves within a constantly shifting set of critical goalposts, in which ideas of musical progress needed to be balanced against familiar ideas of *italianità*. This was a problem already faced by Mascagni, Leoncavallo and Puccini during the 1890s and early 1900s, but increasingly heated by the 1910s. At the same time, anxieties about the success of a "Greater Italy" – a transnational imagined community that united domestic citizens with emigrants through a collective sense of Italian belonging – raised questions

[103] Freely performed even after the 1848 revolutions, by 1913 *Nabucco* had become the archetypal symbol of Verdi's supposed political role in the Risorgimento, and was chosen over more widely-performed mid-period works as an emblem of Verdi's national character. On the centenary celebrations, and the contingency of their ideological foundations, see Laura Basini, "'Cults of Sacred Memory': Parma and the Verdi Centennial Celebrations of 1913", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13/2 (2001), 141-61.

about who and what should be included within an Italian collective identity.[104] In both cases, Italian music's international reception helped to define ideas of new operas' *italianità*, and their position within a national canon. And this was particularly the case, I would suggest, with new works premiered (or widely fêted) abroad, which challenged the limits of Italian belonging in the most geographically obvious way.

The Italian reception of *Isabeau* and *L'amore dei tre re* reveals an array of reactions to their American profiles, that suggest competing strategies for defining an Italian operatic canon. Reporting in Turin's *La stampa* newspaper on *La fanciulla*'s Italian premiere, one critic had already concluded that "[f]or our music, which accompanied it giving rhythm to its movement, the Risorgimento was an end rather than a beginning. For music as for all Italian things."[105] Singers could no longer sing, nor audiences truly understand and feel the music, the author lamented; and the roll-call of clichés that would soon be thrown at *La fanciulla* – "that this opera, written to entertain the New Yorkers, shines with the purest italianità: and that Rossini and Donizetti, Bellini and Verdi are reborn in Puccini, a musician inspired by the great traditions, etc., etc.," – ultimately sought to paper over the obvious disruption between pre- and post-1861 eras.[106] This pessimism was certainly extreme; but wider uncertainty did make foreign perceptions especially important.

Isabeau's Argentine premiere was unsurprisingly covered in extensive detail by the Italian press, with early expressions of envy and frustration at the "the first voices, first smiles and first hiccups" being heard first abroad soon turning to more mixed feelings. In its glowing front-page coverage of the Coliseo premiere, *L'arte melodrammatica* offered many of the predictable clichés outlined by *La Stampa*'s critic.[107] "As soon as Pietro Mascagni arrived in the orchestral pit, the public took to its feet in clamorous applause, which they prolonged for a great deal of time. For the most part they were shouting Long live the maestro! Long live Italian opera!" *Isabeau* itself was nearly as fêted as Puccini's imaginary premiere had been for *La Stampa*: "The judgement of critics on *Isabeau* is very favourable: Mascagni's style appears more elegant than in previous operas: the technique is most

[104] On a "Greater Italy" – an expression coined by economist and politician Luigi Einaudi, see Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).
[105] "Per la nostra musica, che l'accompagnò segnando il ritmo al suo andare improvviso, il Risorgimento piuttosto che un principio è stata una fine. Per la musica come per altre cose italiane." Bergeret, "Il cinquentenario musicale", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 July 1911, 1-2, reprinted from *La Stampa*.
[106] "che quest'opera, scritta per divertire i newyorkesi, splende della più pura italianità: e che Rossini e Donizetti, Bellini e Verdi rivivono in Puccini, musicista inspirato alle grande tradizioni, ecc., ecc.," Ibid.
[107] "L'Isabeau' di Mascagni a Buenos Aires", *L'arte melodrammatica*, 16 June 1911, 1.

effective; the music colours the environment in an admirable way."[108] Rather than reporting the musical objections raised by some critics, or the foreign influences perceived by many in the score, the author's report instead treats Mascagni's opera as the latest chapter in a continuous history of Italian music. In fact, the review is reprinted from *Giornale d'Italia*, suggesting how diasporic pride could be easily rearticulated as patriotic canon-building. Other Italian publications reported the messages sent from Livorno's councillor to their most famous son – with efforts to arrange a low-priced performance of *Isabeau* to enable every social class in Livorno to hear the new opera – as well as the "double triumph" of *Isabeau* and *Fanciulla*'s London premiere.[109] In a three-page report about the Argentine premiere, *Il teatro illustrato* further celebrated the victory of the new opera, in a luxury environment attended by members of the Argentine government. "The curtain falls, and the triumphant success of the opera appears definitive and solemn […] in the love duet between Isabeau and Folco there is a continuous palpitation of beautiful and fresh Italian melody, full of the highest lyricism." Summarising the Argentine press's response, it concluded that "[t]he press notes the success of Mascagni's *Isabeau* and says that the music reveals a new orientation of the Italian maestro. *La Prensa* judges the opera with enthusiastic words and notes the modernity of the style and the force of suggestion in the Mascagnian music."[110] Foreign success could thus secure perceptions both of a composer's *italianità* and his *modernità* – squaring a circle that domestic premieres frequently failed to manage, at least until the music was actually heard.

At the same time, however, resentment at foreign premieres lingered and could colour the reports mediated back to Italian readers. *Il mondo artistico* offered a major round-up of *Isabeau* reviews, which were decidedly more negative than those reported in some other publications.[111] Noting the enthusiasm of the public, and listing the more positive reviews in the Italian-language press and *La Prensa*, the report positioned *La Nación* as a halfway

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[108] "Appena comparve in orchestra Pietro Mascagni, il pubblico in piedi proruppe in acclamazioni fragoroso, che si prolungarono per lungo tempo. Da più parte si gridava Viva il maestro! Viva l'opera italiana! […] Il giudizio dei critici sull'Isabeau è molto faverovole: lo stile di Mascagni appare più elegante delle precedente opere: la tecnica è efficacissima; la musica colorisce l'ambiente in modo ammirevole."

[109] See "Pot-pourri", *Il teatro illustrato*, 1 June 1911, 2; and "Teatri", *L'illustrazione italiana,* 11 June 1911, 597.

[110] "Calata la tela, il trionfo dell'opera appare definitivo e solenne [...] Nel duetto d'amore tra Isabeau e Folco è un continuo palpitare di bella e fresca melodia italiana, piena di altissimo lirismo […] La stampa constata il successo dell'Isabeau di Mascagni e dice che la musica di essa rivela una nuova orientazione del maestro italiano. *La Prensa* giudica l'opera con parole entusiastiche e constata la modernità dello stile e la forza di suggestione della musica mascagnana." "Il trionfale successo dell'"Isabeau" di Pietro Mascagni, *Il teatro illustrato,* 15 June 1911, 2-4.

[111] "Come la stampa di Buenos Ayres accolse di'"Isabeau"", *Il mondo artistico,* 11 July 1911, 3.

house, before citing at length from many disappointed reviews.[112] The final sting came from *Sarmiento*, a magazine produced by the Argentine Education Ministry: "You are certainly not lacking in talent, maestro, and so do consider writing another work, but refrain from surrendering to the pettiness of the carnivorous lives of impresarios and editors, real bloodsuckers [literally "octopuses"] who, if you lose your way, will for a bit of money make you lose the very qualities of your musical work which could instead be enriching for art".[113] Spreading himself thin, Mascagni had disappointed everybody; and involvement with the Costanzi and Mocchi ultimately hampered his ability to compose. In that sense, reporting on foreign premieres offered an easy vehicle for Italian publications covertly to promote a domestic agenda, and to demarcate the limits of an operatic "Greater Italy". Foreign premieres might provoke pride (and even enable an imaginary masterpiece); but they could also push the composer away from critical acceptance: raising further questions about their musical development, and their blatantly commercial relationship with the operatic marketplace.

These discussions about *Isabeau*'s merits should be situated against wider debates by the 1910s about the current direction of Italian operatic composition. As several scholars have outlined, these years witnessed the rise of several significant musical journals devoted to the promotion of modernist repertoire, with Giannotto Bastianelli (and Florentine magazine *La Voce*) emerging as the figurehead of a more radical aesthetic movement.[114] Criticising the perceived cultural decadence of contemporary Italy, Bastianelli built upon earlier fashions for musical organism and "progressivism" to urge a radical break with the Italian recent past – one in which instrumental music and older traditions would assume far greater importance (a point Fausto Torrefranca would argue even more strongly). Bastianelli's study *La crisi musicale europea* (1912) thus contrasted the malaise of Italy's culture with the creativity of Debussy and Strauss, arguing for Italy's belated musical modernity. This argument was explored further by Bastianelli in the following two years, in writings that repeatedly

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[112] "La *Argentina* disse: '*Isabeau* lascia una impressione penosa'. *La Razón*: 'Essa non raggiunge la bellezza artistica'. La *Gaceta de Buenos Ayres*: 'Il pubblico rimase perplesso'. *Ultima Hora*: 'Cavalleria Rusticana continuerà ad essere l'opera prediletta della moltitudini'. *Le Courrier de la Plata* emette lo stesso concetto torcendo il naso ad Isabeau. *The Standard*: 'Mascagni volle debussyare più di Debussy e strausseare più di Strauss, ma sopratutto mascagnare più di Mascagni' [...] *La Manana*: 'Solo mancavano gli accordi della Marcia Reale e il grido di: Viva l'Italia, per dare il diapaison critico dell'entusiasmo del pubblico.'" Ibid.

[113] "A Lei maestro, non manca certo il talento, dunque pensi a scrivere un altro lavoro rinunziando alle piccinerie del vivere carnivoro d'impresari e di editori, vere piovre le quali, s'ella si trascura, per un poco di denaro le faranno perdere l'efficacia della sua opera musicale che può essere feconda per l'arte."

[114] See Capra and Nicolodi, eds, *La critica musicale in Itala mella prima metà del Novecento*, especially 13-54; and Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 1-58.

criticised the decadent movement represented by D'Annunzio as the epitome of Italy's cultural problems.[115] As Ben Earle, Luca Somgli and Mario Moroni suggest, D'Annunzio in practice occupied a complicated position in the history of Italian modernism: his experiments with symbolism were an essential step on the way to more avant-garde projects, but most modernist critics dismissed his work as reactionary and even degenerate.[116] Either way, however, projects such as Bastianelli's study, or Torrefranca's infamous monograph on Puccini tended to raise more questions than they answered, by pushing earlier worries about Italian modernisation to a new pitch. In seeking to take the temperature of Italian musical culture, both scholars seemed unable to pinpoint an appropriate Italian operatic model, with the genre itself possessing an increasingly awkward, bygone status.[117]

In this context, Mascagni occupied an especially problematic position – perhaps even more so than Puccini. *Cavalleria rusticana* could hold a sentimental position for some critics, despite D'Annunzio having dismissed the opera in 1892 as the work of a bandmaster; yet his later operas largely appeared to position him as a symbol of Italian decadence and commercialism.[118] In 1898 Gino Monaldi had already portrayed Mascagni as an artist in crisis, and by 1910 Bastianelli's own study of Mascagni's works would depict the composer as unable to resist copying foreign trends such as symbolism.[119] Mascagni's historical links with the Futurist movement assured him some critical support, and younger figures such as Alfredo Casella would admire Mascagni's efforts at reinvention; but Mascagni's public statements increasingly condemned the advent of modernism.[120] By *Isabeau*'s premiere, the composer was simultaneously celebrated and passé – a figure whose new operas were keenly

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[115] Bastianelli's essay "Le nuove tendenze dell'opera italiana", collected *in Musicisti d'oggi e di ieri: Saggi di critica musicale* (Milan: Studio editorial Lombardo, 1914), 48-58 thus assessed Ottorino Respighi's *Semirâma* against the context of familiar Italian copying of foreign fashions: "Ora è la volta dell'Italia; soltanto che, appunto, l'Italia in tale cammino verso il nuovo contenuto, fa da rimorchio, non è lei che rimorchia" (51). ["Now is the turn of Italy; only that, in fact, Italy on this path to the new content is the trailblazer, not the follower"]. Bastianelli's assessment of *Semirâma* was in fact highly mixed, highlighting the importance of the operatic movement from verismo to the "decadent" style of D'Annunzio, but criticising the opera as deeply derivative of Richard Strauss.

[116] See Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 46-8; and Luca Somigli & Mario Moroni, eds., *Italian Modernism: Italian Culture Between Decadentism and Avant-Garde* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

[117] Fausto Torrefranca's *Giacomo Puccini e l'opera internazionale* was published in 1912 and gave a scathing account of the composer's internationalism and commercial appeal.

[118] D'Annunzio's notorious article "Il capobanda" was published in Neapolitan newspaper *Il Mattino* in September 1892, and criticised Mascagni as blatantly commercial and unartistic. The article's context in D'Annunzio's own work is explored in John Woodhouse, *Gabriele D'Annunzio: Defiant Archangel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 113-5.

[119] Gino Monaldi, *L'uomo e l'artista* (Rome: Voghera, 1898); and Giannotto Bastianelli, *Pietro Mascagni, con nota delle opera e ritrato* (Naples, 1910).

[120] See Alan Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his Operas*, 189-92. Mascagni had been the teacher of Francesco Balilla Pratella.

anticipated, and yet could in some circles also be painted as fundamentally reactionary. A review of Bastianelli's Mascagni book in *Il mondo artistico* in June 1910 thus defended the composer as the living figure most possessing the spirit of Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi, only a year before the same publication spitefully listed all the negative reports on the same composer's new work.[121]

Isabeau's reception thus served several contradictory aims for Italian authors. The opera's novelty in an Argentine context could promise a combination of invention and *italianità* that Italian critics had repeatedly failed to find in Mascagni's newer works, potentially encouraging a similar perception within Italy; and it could assert Italy's continued musical prowess in foreign markets. At the same time, Argentine critics risked reinforcing views of Italian backwardness, and in particular of Mascagni's creative decline. Presenting an opera abroad could moreover be an admission of blatant populist ambition, furthering ideas of opera as a problematically commercial artform. The multiplicity of critical voices ultimately did not offer resolution so much as amplify and enrich previous confusion. Yet without doubt it positioned Mascagni as embedded in a transatlantic market economy: one that challenged easy ideas of him as an "Italian" composer.

The eventual arrival of *Isabeau* in Italy was accompanied by predictable reminders of its Argentine provenance, and the composer himself declaring the Italian premiere a triumphant success. Some early critical reactions to its La Scala premiere were warm: the *Gazzetta teatrale italiana* praised the opera's "Italian footprints, its melodic fluidity" and noted the audience's genuine enthusiasm for the opera, while *Ars et labor* commended the occasion as "a completely successful show".[122] Presented simultaneously in Milan and at Venice's La Fenice, both performances had substantially different casts from 1911, and Maria Farneti only appeared in a Naples production the following month conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone.[123] The inter-urban rivalry to premiere the opera, and the sustained interest in its foreign baptism even appears to have strengthened perceptions of the work's national heritage for some:

> The success of *Isabeau* must be sought above all in its italianità. In times such as ours, of musical Byzantinism, when melodrama goes from us Frenchified and Germanified, the

[121] *Il mondo artistico*, 1 June 1910.
[122] "impronta d'italianità, di fluidità melodica", "Cronaca Milanese", *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 30 January 1912, 1; "uno spettacolo completamente riuscito", "In Platea", *Ars et labor*, February 1912, 158-9.
[123] Cast details are listed in Flury, *Pietro Mascagni*, 122-3. Mascagni opted to conduct in Venice.

> beautiful, pure and sweet Italian melody, of a simple and downtrodden phrase, a long and easy sigh, was greeted with joy, not only by the public but also by the singer, who finally has the chance to put Italian song back in its homeland after a long time.
>
> In the three acts of the opera, Isabeau and Folco always sing, now sweetly and passionately, now with wild abandon […] There is in the whole score an almost Southern exuberance, which hasn't captured us for a long time, and which has pleasantly surprised and subtly seduced us.[124]

The desperation underlining such assertions was made clear by prominent accounts – equally nostalgic for the past – that condemned the total lack of inspiration in the score. "This latest work by Mascagni, born and brought up and living here among the most indecorous and grotesque polemics, has this singular quality above all the previous works of *Cavalleria*'s author, that not a single point has managed to seduced the public, not a single phrase managed to move it."[125] Even if critics could not agree in their assessment of *Isabeau*'s ultimate merits, however, the opera was at least accorded a grand La Scala opening. The opening run had 18 performances – an honour notably never bestowed on Panizza's *Aurora*, despite his Milanese's connections. Homecoming demanded a degree of pomp that could outdo the Argentine premiere, and truly make Italian a foreign-bred child. Yet efforts to assert the opera's artistic standing and national qualities nevertheless still had to wrestle with its chequered history, the "indecorous and grotesque polemics" that had preceded its first performances. Baptised abroad, *Isabeau* later received a further five performances at La Scala in 1916, before largely retreating to more provincial theatres. However useful Argentina would prove for later Italian governments, the opera was uneasily assimilated into a national operatic pantheon.[126]

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[124] "Il successo di *Isabeau* va cercato sopratutto nella sua italianità. In periodo, come questo, di bizantinismo musicale, mentre il melodramma si va anche da noi infranciosando e germanizzando, la bella, pura e dolce melodia italiana, dalla frase semplice e snobdata, dal largo e facile respire, fu risalutata con gioia, non solamente dal pubblico, ma anche dai cantanti che ebbero finalmente occasione di rimettere in valore il bel canto italiano da troppo tempo avvilito nella sua patria. Nei tre atti dell'opera, Isabeau e Folco cantano sempre, ora dolcemente e appassionatamente, ora con impeto selvaggio […] C'è in tutto lo spartito un'esuberanza quasi meridionale, alla quale da tempo non eravamo più avvvezzi, che ci ha sorpresi piacevolmente e sovvente trascinati." "Rivista Teatrale", *L'illustrazione italiana*, 28 January 1912, 86-7.

[125] "Giacchè quest'ultimo lavoro di Mascagni, nato e crescuito e vissuto sin qui fra le più indecorose e grottesche polemiche, ha questo di singolare sopra tutte le opera anteriori del'autore di *Cavalleria,* che nemmeno in punto riesce trascinare il pubblico, nemmeno con una frase riesce a commuoverlo." ""Isabeau" di Pietro Mascagni alla Scala", *Il mondo artistico,* 1 February 1912, 6 (signed F.F.). The review goes on to acknowledge some public enthusiasm but lamented the total loss of inspiration on Mascagni's part, and flawed attempts to imitate Debussy: "il suo estro meraviglioso è evidentamente inaridito" ["his marvellous well of inspiration is evidently arid"].

[126] See David Aliano, *Mussolini's National Project in Argentina* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012).

In this respect, Montemezzi's opera was initially more fortunate. After its solid La Scala debut, the New York triumph of *L'amore dei tre re* was an uncontroversial boon to the composer's reputation and the source of widespread critical approbation. To say that the opera had enjoyed an immediate success was only half the truth, remarked *Il mondo artistico*: from practically nowhere the names of Montemezzi and Benelli were now familiar in New York, and an illustrious future surely awaited them.[127] Plaudits for Arturo Toscanini were welcome, but also a double-edged sword: the conductor's departure from La Scala in 1908 in favour of the Met was a lingering disappointment for many writers. Musical developments in Milan could potentially shore up *L'amore*'s reputation further. The messy premiere of Mascagni's D'Annunzian opera *Parisina* at La Scala in December 1913 was an obvious contrast: a similarly gloomy work, its opening night notoriously ran on until 3am, by comparison with which L'*amore*'s concision could only seem a blessing. In the context of growing critical enthusiasm for instrumental and modernist works, the approval of New York critics for the highly symphonic *L'amore* was a further boost: proof that repertory other than verismo might win public acclaim. In a later account, Bastianelli would himself praise Montemezzi for seeking "his own ways on the very worn-out floorboards of the Italian music stage."[128]

Surviving correspondence between Montemezzi and Ricordi does make clear the impetus the Metropolitan Opera's success offered to Montemezzi's career, with new projects being discussed in the succeeding months.[129] Before its premiere in New York, *L'amore* had seemed to trail beyond Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* in Ricordi's expectations; but afterwards the composer's standing in the Ricordi stable quickly rose.[130] Montemezzi's next operatic project would in fact be another D'Annunzian work, based on the author's play *La Nave*.[131] Montemezzi's adaptation was famously costly: an entire ship was built for the La Scala premiere of the "Adriatic" opera in 1918 – a project that was, appropriately enough,

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[127] "Dall'America del Nord", *Il mondo artistico*, 21 January 1914, 6.
[128] Giannotto Bastinanelli, article in *La nazione*, 23 December 1918, cited in Raffaelle Mellace, "The Art of Seduction: Basiliola (and Montemezzi's orchestra) on D'Annunzio's *Nave*", in *Essays on the Montemezzi-D'Annunzio Nave*, ed. David Chandler (Norwich: Durrant Publishing, 2012), 249-68; cited 249.
[129] The Ricordi digital archive holds an untranscribed collection of letters between Montemezzi and Ricordi: https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/people/display/617?show=100. Accessed 15 December 2018. A letter from Montemezzi to Tito Ricordi dated 4 January 1914 (from Padova) discusses plans for further stagings of *L'amore*, and thanks Ricordi for his congratulations.
[130] A letter from Tito Ricordi dated 2 July 1913 (to New York) confirms that *L'amore* had been scheduled for the 1913-14 Met season (in agreement with Gatti-Casazza), but only on Ricordi's condition that *Francesca da Rimini* would appear in 1914-15, were its Italian premiere a success. See https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/letter/display/LLET014262. Accessed 3 February 2019.
[131] D'Annunzio's play had premiered in 1908 with a theatrical score by Ildebrando Pizzetti.

partly funded by Ricordi's international profits – but the work eventually proved a mixed success. Even *L'amore* failed to sustain its Italian success in the following seasons and decades, as more avant-garde projects began to attract critical interest and Montemezzi's celebrity faded.[132] But by then the composer's extraordinary position within New York's musical history was well-established. Whatever else happened later in his career, *L'amore* had made a name for Montemezzi in American operatic history.

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As the summer of 1914 approached, it is clear that attempts to shape Italy's operatic future were deeply conflicted. Caught within longstanding debates over the musical past and newer musical developments, critics and managements also had to contend with the prominent composers – as well as singers and conductors – being seduced by American theatres to premiere their work. However much these developments might be slotted into familiar narratives of Italian operatic exportation, they also raised profound questions about the limits of a national operatic canon: which works, which styles and which figures should be written into the pages of Italian history, and how should foreign perceptions be responded to? Ultimately, national imperatives may have been fundamental in shaping canon-building at this time, but foreign activity was also a crucial dimension: if *Isabeau* and *L'amore* could be central to American operatic canons, that situation also posed problems for their Italian standing, ones that echoed broader debates about Italian citizenship and community.

The two operas' performance histories in the Americas also expose the changing dynamics between Milan, New York and Buenos Aires since the events of 1887-8. The world premiere of *Otello* had seemed to assert La Scala's place at the centre of a global opera industry, with Verdi's opera quickly hailed as a national masterpiece. By the early 1910s, however, high-profile premieres and productions signalled a clear change in transatlantic relations. Now the Italian operatic media storm emerged from Buenos Aires and New York: and the national position of such works within a transatlantic musical economy was far from certain within Italy. Operatic premieres and triumphs abroad could thus be remarkably similar to emigrant children in the "structure of feeling" they provoked, as *Il mondo artistico*'s journalist implied.[133] The source of this chapter's epigraph, Giovanni Pascoli's

[132] See Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e musictsa nel ventennio fascista* (Fiesole: Discanto, 1984) on Italy's fascist musical culture.
[133] The phrase "structure of feeling" is borrowed from Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961).

poem "Italy" (1904) is the most celebrated depiction of this: the sad tenderness felt by an elderly relative towards a grandchild who arrives from America, born abroad and now painfully distant from the Italian homeland. Yet in the context of wider uncertainty about Italian operatic style, foreign success could ultimately prove an obstacle towards an operatic work being included in a national pantheon, as well as a source of pride and nostalgia. In this sense, the connection between opera and emigration reveals a very real historical link. Only in 2009 did Italy finally open a national emigration museum in Rome, in a belated celebration of the contribution of the Italian diaspora to Italy's economic and cultural richness.[134]

One might conclude, then, by asking again which operatic works and actors have been excluded – even killed off – by the "slaughterhouse" of the canon, to borrow Franco Moretti's words.[135] What Italian works and performances have been erased by the familiar geographical mapping of Italian history, in Italy or elsewhere? Have our operatic maps changed significantly since 1914, in their overwhelming focus on Italy? To ask such questions is not necessarily to make a claim for the aesthetic worth of either *Isabeau* or *L'amore dei tre re*; the critics cited above may do that, but recent productions of the two operas have certainly not been met with uniform enthusiasm.[136] But it *is* to advocate recovering the elevated fantasies once provoked by works now at the operatic margins; and to wonder if, and when, they might raise such hopes again.

[134] Musical composition by diasporic composers in the 1910s is of course a further area of investigation, and a potentially very rich one: for a general discussion of diasporic artistic activity, see Sebastiano Martelli, "Dal vecchio mondo al sogno americano. Realtà e immaginario dell'emigrazione nella letteratura italiana", in *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana*, 434-88.

[135] Franco Moretti, "The Slaughterhouse of Literature", *Modern Language Quarterly* 61/1 (2000), 207-28. Moretti's (by now well-known) argument is that scholarly canons are necessarily restricted by what individuals can read – or indeed watch and listen to – and that this has obscured our understanding of generic and stylistic evolution. See also Moretti's *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013) for a more recent exposition of these ideas.

[136] On *Isabeau*, see for example https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/jul/15/isabeau-review-opera-holland-park-london-anne-sophie-duprels; on *L'amore dei tre re* see https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/opera/3666859/Old-tosh-that-can-still-grip.html. Accessed 19 December 2018.

Conclusion: The longevity of *italianità*

On 23 May 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. As a member of the Triple Alliance, Italy had advanced its diplomatic relations with both Germany and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, not least as a means to recover irredentist territories to Italy's north. Following the outbreak of war in July 1914, however, Italy refused to support its partners, arguing that the alliance was only defensive; and it soon began to negotiate with the Allies over potential territorial gains from entering the conflict. The majority of parliament opposed the declaration of war, but Prime Minister Antonio Salandra was supported by a coalition of nationalists, Liberals and Socialists – notably Benito Mussolini – who campaigned for war as a means of national regeneration. For some, armed conflict could mark the beginning of a socialist revolution; for others, the final stage of the Risorgimento: Trieste, Trentino and other lands would finally be freed from foreign control.

After November 1918, some of those fantasies would be fulfilled, as the Austrian-Hungarian Empire collapsed. But the losses within Italy had been enormous. Over 600,000 soldiers had been killed, with the Battle of Caporetto in 1917 becoming notorious for its devasting loss of Italian life. Italy was awarded a seat in the League of Nations in 1920 as a sign of its war contribution, but the horror of the conflict fuelled social unrest even further, encouraging the rise of Mussolini's Fascists to power in 1922. During the three years of the war, musical activity within Italy was also significantly reduced. La Scala was often the site of military benefits, but funding for theatres across Italy fell and transcontinental travel became significantly more difficult. Puccini chose to premiere *Il trittico* (1918) in New York rather than Rome, but he did not attend for reasons of safety; the death-themed trilogy echoed broader pessimism in Italian cultural life. During the war a nascent avant-garde continued to flourish, positioning opera further as a decadent artform.[1]

Yet there is a sense in which the war also had a decisively positive impact on Italian opera's cultural standing. From November 1917, German-language opera was removed from the Met stage and contracts with German singers were cancelled, as the USA entered the war and the "enemy's words" were considered inappropriate. Argentina remained neutral, yet its relationship with Italian opera companies ensured that Wagner was also boycotted, in an act

[1] For a recent study of cultural life in Italy during the War, see Graziella Parati, ed., *Italy and the Cultural Politics of World War 1* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016).

of cultural solidarity.[2] Italian repertory thus flourished in the Americas, and its image as a benign emblem of Italian identity was reinforced.[3] Within Italy's own press, cultural production could also seem a key tenet of the nation's strength amid the human and economic devastation wrought by the conflict. "I'm coming from the winning battle, that involving arms, and tomorrow I'll return to see Italy seated in Trieste", wrote Guido Podrecca in *Il popolo d'Italia* – the newspaper recently founded by Mussolini – after the premiere of Montemezzi's *La nave* at La Scala, immediately after the armistice in November 1918. "But isn't this battle, too, fought at La Scala tonight, a battle for our Italy, for its musical becoming, for its artistic primacy? […] Italy will return to a primacy in the world: that of art, the most pure and bloodless primacy, and in this none will be able to contend with her. For this our youth should work, following the traces of the great masters, with their eyes fixed on the future."[4] Notwithstanding the bloodshed of war, opera was a sphere in which Italy could still assert its cultural appeal: the Americas may have begun to usurp Italy's position as the centre of Italian cultural activity, but *italianità* itself remained as alluring as ever.

The years following the Great War have traditionally been seen as the starting point for the century of North American cultural dominance, when the USA decisively overtook European nations in economic terms. Argentina's twentieth-century history has been characterised by economic decline and severe political conflict, yet its global importance around the 1920s has remained unquestioned. As the preceding chapters have shown, however, both New York and Buenos Aires were by this time already both longstanding sites for defining and projecting ideas about Italian opera and identity. By way of conclusion, therefore, I would like briefly to survey the developments that had occured during this period, in order to consider the cultural formations in place by 1914.

The world premiere of *Otello* at La Scala constituted a major moment in the operatic history of post-unification Italy: an event that at one level reinforced Ricordi's perception

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[2] Ronald H. Dolkart, "The Bayreuth of South America: Wagnerian Opera in Buenos Aires", *The Opera Quarterly* 1/3 (1983), 84–100; see 90. As Paoletti has shown, the war also encouraged attempts to coordinate seasons between the Costanzi, La Scala and the Colón: see Matteo Paoletti, "Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno: La Società Teatrale Internazionale (1908-1931) e i suoi protagonisti" (PhD dissertation, Università di Bologna, 2015), 290-304. On the USA, see Laura Tunbridge, *Singing in the Age of Anxiety: Lieder Performances in London and New York Between the World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

[3] The advent of the war also increased a sense of collective identity among Italian émigrés: the conflict was widely covered in the diasporic press and a new degree of unity forged through conflict.

[4] "La Nave, D'Annunzio-Montemezzi", *Il popolo d'Italia*, 4 November 1918; article reprinted in *Essays on the Montemezzi'D'Annunzio Nave*, ed. David Chandler, trans. Monica Cuneo (Norwich: Durrant Publishing, 2012), 83-91.

around 1885 of Milan's central position in the global operatic economy. As Chapter One demonstrated, *Otello*'s premiere was a media event that promised to draw audiences worldwide into an experience of simultaneity, even as technological connection contended with varying degrees of geographical and cultural distance. The mythologization of Verdi as a Risorgimento hero was reiterated in many parts of the US and Argentine press around and after the La Scala premiere, while American attempts to stage *Otello* reflected both shifting conceptions of the operatic work concept, and emerging perceptions of American operatic preeminence. As I have shown, the figure of Tamagno-Otello was crucial in this. The tenor's vocal power, and his complex relationship with Verdi's opera, encapsulated broader tensions surrounding the opera's mediality and its future performance history within the Americas. At the same time, the reception of Verdi's political standing in New York and Buenos Aires reflected both diasporic pride and new forms of technological connection across the Atlantic. The continued fascination with Otello-Tamagno within early twentieth-century Italy, I suggest, might thus be framed as an effort to recover an embodied notion of *italianità* within a new mediascape, and a new set of political geographies.

The relationship between Italian identity, opera and emigrant activity becomes even more explicit – yet contested – in the case of *Cavelleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci.* While both operas were given their world premieres in Italy, some of the very first performances of the double bill occurred in Buenos Aires and New York, alongside a wide range of productions of the individual operas. The juxtaposition of operatic depictions of the *mezzogiorno* with rapidly increasing numbers of Southern emigrants provoked a surprisingly wide range of reactions from diverse spectatorships, reflecting the controversial position of Italian emigration, as well as the influence of longstanding discourses surrounding Italy's "southerness". As I argued in Chapter Two, however, an interpretation of the operas' reception solely through the lens of emigrant politics risks simplifying the social and aesthetic complexities of operatic experience. By tracing the operas' critical reception and performance history during the following decade and more, I have instead revealed a more nuanced situation, in which the operas fluctuated between contemporary politics and aesthetic escape, a symbol both of urban change and of alluring continuity. As such, their reception at once reflected the paradoxes of "realist" opera and encouraged perceptions of Italian identity rooted in the South, an identity both vividly contemporary and pastoral. Within Italy, such ideas would be challenged by competing definitions rooted in naval history and "Tuscan

revivalism". Yet as I have argued, American ideas of Southern *italianità* would prove especially powerful in subsequent decades.

Emigration was undoubtedly a crucial factor in shaping perceptions of the Americas as the new centre for Italian cultural activity, as historians have long noted. The commercial allure of New York and Buenos Aires for composers and performers was also highly significant, however, especially as live performances were supplemented by the output of the USA's gramophone industry. Chapter Three investigated these issues by focusing upon Puccini's 1907 tour to New York: an event that followed his 1905 visit to Buenos Aires, as well as the disastrous La Scala premiere of his latest opera, *Madama Butterfly*. The reception of Puccini and his operas during his New York visit exposes the extent to which tours crystallised new economic relations between the Americas and Italy, helping to define a nexus between Italy, vocality and femininity – one especially influential in the case of Puccini. The US gramophone industry also played a major role in furthering definitions of American and Italian musical identities, as the opera disc was marketed (and defended) as a uniquely American musical medium. These contemporary discourses can ultimately also invite a revised interpretation of *Madama Butterfly*: an opera dealing with inter-cultural relations between Old and New Worlds, in which Japan has suggestive echoes of Italy. If the opera's orientalism remains deeply problematic and cannot be overlooked, critical studies of the opera can nonetheless productively be supplemented by early twentieth-century discussions around ownership of the Italian voice.

By the early 1900s, Argentina and the USA's collective standing as prospective centres of Italian cultural activity was evidenced within Italy by a wide range of government activities and forms of cultural production: from emigrant schools and banks, to travelogues and opera reviews highlighting the richness of American cultural life. These activities were designed to capitalise on the fragile economic opportunities of a "Greater Italy", while furthering public awareness of Italy's global connections – a process already at work in 1887, but rapidly increasing in the following two decades. Chapter Four explored these processes via an examination of Milan's International Exposition in 1906, an event that highlighted Italian industrial progress, while drawing attention both to Latin America and to Italy's diasporic community amongst its displays. Italy's musical past and present proved problematic, however. Celebrations of Italy's musical achievements at the Exposition were minimal, despite ongoing contemporary discussion of Italy's unique vocal gifts. The failure of Franchetti's *La figlia di Iorio* likewise capped a series of recent operatic failures at La

Scala. Yet the Exposition also included a widely acclaimed revival of Verdi's *La traviata*, first staged a few months earlier to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the composer's passing, in a then novel "updating" to the mid nineteenth century. If the *Traviata* revival's success at one level reflected the appeal of an established classic, I have argued, the production's complex relationship with temporality and geography also discloses affinities with the Exposition (and with Milan's wider urban geography), as well as contemporary verismo operas. Considered in this light, the Exposition as a whole reveals the relational, even transverse aspects of Italian musical identity, formulated both through its Germanic and French others and via its transatlantic doubles. At the same time, the Exposition invites a revised account of early operatic staging experiments – one focused less exclusively on a break with an ossified past, than on a newly globalised operatic canon, and in exploring opera's spectacular and immersive potential.

The shifting transatlantic power relations investigated in this dissertation reached their apex with the operatic premieres discussed in Chapter Five. By the early 1910s, the Italian government was ever keen to celebrate the achievements of the previous fifty years – a narrative of progress whose success would be demonstrated by foreign commentators – and the operatic season at the 1911 unification festival aimed to exemplify this. Yet the rise of Italian operatic premieres in the Americas, and the emergence even of a specifically Italian-American operatic canon, suggested that the tortuous future of the genre was more likely to occur abroad. If *La fanciulla del West* failed consistently to please either critics or the public in New York or Rome, both *Isabeau* and *L'amore dei tre re* enjoyed sustained performance histories and bolstered fantastical critical hopes immediately following their first performances in Buenos Aires and New York. The operas' reception interacted in complex ways with aspirations for a "nativist" operatic school in the Americas, at a time of growing musical nationalism. Yet from an Italian perspective, these operas' foreign affiliations were a source of considerable anxiety, that intersected with broader questions of citizenship, nationhood and affective belonging within both political and musicological discussions. Ultimately, I have argued, the nationalist drives at work during the 1910s have influenced the operatic canons we still draw upon, affecting critical attitudes towards non-Italian and emigrant composers alike.

The overall picture drawn by this dissertation, then, is one of constant interchange and re-definition, underpinned by gradually shifting transatlantic relations. If ideas of Italy, Italian opera, and Italian identity had long been defined outside Italy's borders, during the period

examined here such rhetoric was deployed and reshaped by new American superpowers, in an effort to define their own musico-political standing. Such tropes were also a fundamental dimension of Italian (musical) self-fashioning in the Liberal Era. Crucially, these ideas intersected with new modes of operatic production and consumption, as Italy moved from being a site of operatic dissemination – as with *Otello* – to one that witnessed operatic works, recordings, performance combinations and celebrity events being given birth across the Atlantic. The interplay between the social and the technological, the political and the imaginary, is ultimately fundamental to this dissertation's argument, and to its wider scholarly contribution. Boldly put, this dissertation's claim is not simply that ideas of Italian opera and *italianità* were defined outside Italy during this period, but that such ideas were inseparable from (and *unexperienceable* beyond) the new operatic landscape in which they were articulated and felt: one in which new works, performers and audiences circulated with an unprecedented degree of rapidity, old repertoire continued to be performed far beyond Italy, and ideas of operatic modernity were interlinked with the Americas. If the New World had long been a site of Italian operatic expansion, by the outbreak of the Great War New York and Buenos Aires had become prospective capitals of Italian operatic culture: cities that would shape ideas and practices in Italy and elsewhere, in spite of Italy's continued imaginative hold on American audiences.

As a concluding thought, then, one might consider to what an extent the cultural formations in place by 1914 have remained broadly stable since then. In 1905 Federico Garlanda created a scandal with his monograph *La terza Italia*, a study of contemporary Italy that purported to be letters home from a North American visitor.[5] Garlanda decried the decadence of contemporary Italy and the government's inadequate support for emigrants, but declared that music had always remained a uniquely Italian artform: "Truly there is no other example of a nation, which, when almost annihilated politically, has given to the world so many proofs of its vitality, and of the innate, irrepressible energy of her soul."[6] Nearly sixty years later, another media storm would erupt with the publication of *The Italians* (1964) by Luigi Barzini, the New York-educated son of Luigi Barzini senior. Written in English for North American audiences, *The Italians* offered a similarly ambivalent portrait of Barzini's home country informed by North American perspectives, and caused outrage among some

[5] Federico Garlanda, *La Terza Italia: Lettere di un Yankee* (Rome: 1905); republished as *The New Italy: A Discussion of its Present Political and Social Conditions*, trans. M.E. Wood (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1911).
[6] Ibid., 369-70.

Italian readers. In the present day, I would suggest, the Americas (above all the USA) continue to be fundamental reference points for Italy in defining its national character and cultural progress, and foreign perceptions of Italy's cultural richness and *italianità* shape both its domestic activities and its international interactions. As recent scholarship has suggested, Italy has never managed to assert itself militarily, but it continues to lead the world in terms of soft power.[7] The Made in Italy brand launched in the 1980s has capitalised on this by marketing food, clothing, cars and design on the basis of their Italian provenance – a link between Italy, sensuality and aesthetics updated to late twentieth-century modernity. (Tellingly, though, its name is in English). And La Scala remains an essential stop for any opera performer aspiring towards a global career: even if New York, London or Paris might boast more performances and (perhaps) more consistent artistic standards in the twenty first century.

If Italy remains an alluring idea for many, the USA and Argentina have also remained key sites for projecting such an image. Italian opera has been central to the cultural life of New York and Buenos Aires since 1914, in spite of the political upheavals that shook Italy during the immediate post-1918 years. During World War Two, Italian opera remained on the stage of both the Met and the Colón (as did German repertoire – in a significant change of mood). Within present-day New York, one need not turn to celebrated depictions of its own Italian-American history to see the attractions of Italy and its supposedly innate musicality being advertised.[8] When Oscar-winning, New York-based film director Woody Allen made a film set in Rome in 2012, he cast Italian tenor Fabio Armiliato in a key role: an awkward, entirely untrained amateur singer who eventually performs *Pagliacci* at the Rome opera house.[9] In Buenos Aires, the Colón's centrality to the city's public image (one that justified a $60 million refurbishment during a harrowing financial crisis) has kept Italian repertory prominent in the city's tourist image; while decades of successful Argentine opera performers have propagated seductive images of Italy abroad.[10] The San Francisco Opera's most recent production of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* was staged by Argentine tenor-turned-director José Cura, and set among the Italian community in early twentieth-century Buenos

[7] On soft power, see Joseph Nye, "Soft Power", *Foreign Policy*, Vol.80 (1990), 153-71. On Italy's soft power, see for example Anna Cento Bull, *Modern Italy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[8] On *Cavalleria rusticana* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy, see Marcia J. Citron, "Operatic Style and Structure in Coppola's *Godfather* Trilogy", *The Musical Quarterly* 87/3 (2004), 423-67.
[9] *To Rome with Love* (2012).
[10] On the refurbishment, see Robert Turnbull, "An Operatic Drama Performed Mostly Offstage", *The New York Times*, 16 June 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/arts/17iht-turnbull.html, accessed 7 February 2019.

Aires (see Fig. 6.1). In the lead male roles were two Italian tenors, Roberto Aronica and Marco Berti, with Milanese conductor Daniele Calligari in the pit. Revival director José Maria Condemi praised the "equalizing qualities" of the two operas, declaring "at some point, we can all relate".[11] With that image of Italo-Argentine-North American circulation, and those fantasies of universal connection, one can perhaps ponder the enduring appeal of *italianità* in our own twenty-first-century modernity.

Fig. 6.1. *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera, 2018

[11] Georgia Rowe, "SF Opera Season Kicks Off with a Pair of Beloved Torrid Love Affairs", *Mercury News*, 4 September 2018: https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/09/04/sf-opera-kicks-off-season-with-a-pair-of-beloved-torrid-love-affairs/, accessed 6 February 2019.

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Appendix: Comparative list of performances in 1886/7, 1893/4, 1904/5 and 1912/13

The following lists are intended to indicate the range of repertory performed at La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the Teatro Colón and Teatro de la Ópera during the period explored in this dissertation.[1] They do not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of operatic activity in Milan, New York or Buenos Aires in any given season, nor to account fully for any one theatre during this dissertation's historical purview. Operas at La Scala were typically presented for highly extended runs of up to twenty performances – sometimes more – whereas seasons in New York and Buenos Aires might include a very short run (even a single performance) of certain operas.

La Scala 1886-7 season

Carmen

Robert le diable

Edmea (Catalani)

Les pêcheurs de perles

La traviata

Salammbò

(The following season swung back to Italian opera*: Aida, Otello, Flora Mirabilis, Lucrezia Borgia* and *Les Pêcheurs de perles*)

Metropolitan opera 1886-7 season [German season]

Die Königin von Saba

Die Walküre

Aida

Le Prophète

Merlin (Goldmark)

[1] La Scala seasons have been taken from Carlo Gatti, *Il Teatro alla Scala nella storia e nell'arte, 1778-1963* (Milan: La Scala, 1964); the Metropolitan Opera seasons can be accessed online: http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/frame.htm. Accessed 19 February 2019. Seasons in Buenos Aires have been reconstructed via historical newspapers.

Das Goldene Kreuz (Brüll-Mosenthal)

Tristan und Isolde

Tannhäuser

Faust

Lohengrin

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Rienzi

Masaniello

Fidelio

Teatro Colón 1887 season

Aida

Mefistofele

Lucrezia Borgia

La traviata

Il barbiere di Siviglia

La favorita

Les Huguenots

La Juive

Un ballo in maschera

Ruy Blas

La Scala 1893-4 season

Die Walküre

Loreley

Manon Lescaut

Fior D'Alpe (Franchetti)

Cristoforo Colombo

Lucia di Lammermoor

Rigoletto

Metropolitan Opera 1893-4 season

Faust

Lucia di Lammermoor

Hamlet

Cavalleria rusticana

Philémon et Baucis (paired with *Cavalleria*)

Lohengrin

Roméo et Juliette

Pagliacci

Orfeo ed Eurydice (paired with *Pagliacci*)

Les Huguenots

Rigoletto

Carmen

Don Giovanni

L'amico Fritz

Semiramide

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Tannhäuser

Le nozze di Figaro

La traviata

Werther

Aida

L'Africaine

Teatro de la Ópera 1894 season

Carmen

Tannhäuser

Falstaff

Otello

La Gioconda

Lohengrin

Mefistofele

Cavalleria rusticana

Les Huguenots

Manon Lescaut

L'Africaine

Aida

Norma

Don Giovanni

La forza del destino

La Scala 1904-5 season

Aida

Don Pasquale

Tannhäuser

La Wally

Le nozze di Figaro

Der Freischütz

Il barbiere di Siviglia

Metropolitan Opera 1904-5 season

Aida

Lucia di Lammermoor

Parsifal

Carmen

La traviata

Tannhäuser

La Gioconda

Le nozze di Figaro

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Lucrezia Borgia

Don Pasquale

Der Ring des Nibelungen

La bohème

Rigoletto

Il barbiere di Siviglia

L'elisir d'amore

Roméo et Juliette

Tristan und Isolde

Tosca

Un ballo in maschera

Faust

Les Huguenots

Die Fledermaus

Teatro de la Ópera 1905 season [Puccini festival]

Manon Lescaut

Madama Butterfly

Edgar

Tosca

La bohème

Faust

Roméo et Juliette

Aida

La damnation de Faust

Un ballo in Maschera

Manon

Vita Brettone

Don Pasquale

La Scala 1912-13 season

Don Carlo

Feursnot

Salome (Strauss works presented in a double bill)

Lohengrin

La Habanera (Laparra)

La fanciulla del West

Le donne curiose

Oberon

Cavalleria rusticana

Norma

Carmen

L'amore dei tre re

Metropolitan Opera 1912-13 season

Manon Lescaut

Tannhäuser

La Gioconda

Königskinder

Madama Butterfly

Cavalleria rusticana

Pagliacci

Faust

Die Zauberflöte

La fanciulla del West

La bohème

Hänsel und Gretel

Aida

Il segreto di Susanna

Orfeo ed Eurydice

Les Huguenots

Parsifal

Il trovatore

Tosca

Otello

Il barbiere di Siviglia

Les contes D'Hoffmann

Le donne curiose

Manon

Tristan und Isolde

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Cyrano (Damrosch)

La traviata

Boris Godunov

Don Pasquale

Teatro Colón 1913 season

Lohengrin

La sonnambula

Isabeau

Rigoletto

Manon

Un ballo in maschera

Lucia di Lammermoor

Loreley

Mignon

Salome

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